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Fig. 1.
Vase of Kang-hsi coral-red porcelain.
(Baron Iwasaki collection).

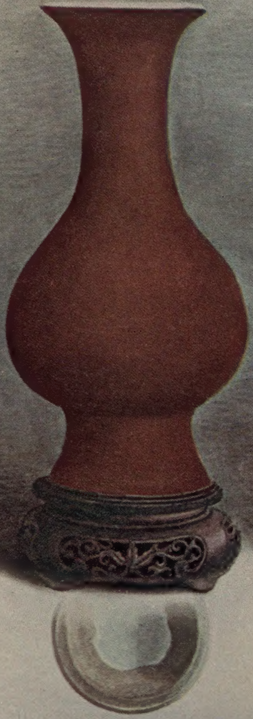


Fig. 2.
Vase of Kang-hsi craquelé porcelain
with superimposed transmutation glaze.

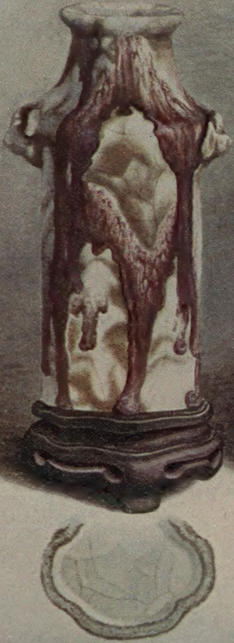
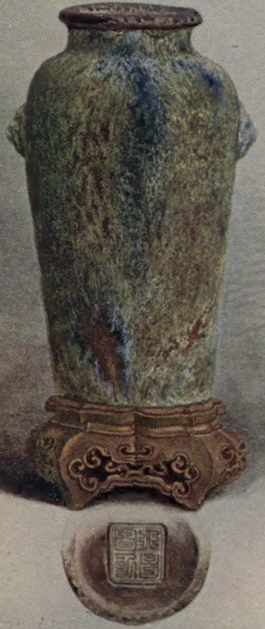


Fig. 3.
Vase of Kang-hsi Kuang-yao transmutation ware
(Baron Iwasaki collection)



Oriental Series

CHINA

Its History Arts and Literature

VASE OF *KANG-HSI KWANG-YAO* TRANSMUTATION WARE.
Baron Iwasaki collection. (See page 350.)

BY

CAPTAIN F. BRINKLEY

VOLUME IX

KERAMIC ART

VASE OF *KANG-HSI* CORAL-RED PORCELAIN.
Baron Iwasaki collection. (See page 301.)

ILLUSTRATED

VASE OF *KANG-HSI* CRAQUELÉ PORCELAIN WITH SUPER-IMPOSED TRANSMUTATION GLAZE.
(See page 344.)

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J. B. MILLET COMPANY
BOSTON AND TOKYO

Oriental Series

CHINA

Its History Arts and Literature

BY

CAPTAIN F. BRINKLEY

VOLUME IX

KERAMIC ART

ILLUSTRATED

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UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
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CHINA
ITS HISTORY ARTS AND LITERATURE

Chapter I

CHINESE PORCELAIN AND POTTERY

AS TO THE FIRST MANUFACTURE OF TRUE PORCELAIN IN CHINA

IN former years France stood alone in her appreciation of Chinese keramic productions. By French amateurs only was properly understood the double triumph of æstheticism and technique achieved in the monochromatic vases of the Ching-tê-chên factories. In England, the popular idea of Chinese porcelain was a highly decorated, formally painted ware. So little valued were monochromatic or even blue-and-white pieces, that if any such found their way to London, they were deemed unsaleable until their surface had received pictorial additions at the hands of Anglo-Saxon potters. Such sacrileges are no longer perpetrated. All Western collectors have now learned to appreciate the incomparable beauty of the *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung* blues. These fine pieces, as well as their contemporaries of the monochromatic and polychromatic orders, derive additional value from the fact that, so far as human foresight can reach, the potters of the Middle Kingdom will never be able to reproduce them with absolute success. Those who have read the accounts, recorded in Chinese and Japanese literature, of men almost deified as the discoverers of some new *boccaro* clay; or who have heard the fond tradition how the *pâte* of every choice piece fired at the potteries of the Po-yang Lake had invariably received a century's manipulation; or how the materials of celebrated glazes were ground and re-ground during the life-time of half a generation until they were reduced to impalpable powder; or how, to distinguish the true colouring pigment — the Mohammedan blue, worth more than its weight in gold — from the many imperfect compounds which nature's laboratory offered, was an accomplishment possessed by the most gifted experts only; those who are familiar with all these things have no difficulty in understanding that the decadence of such extraordinary processes, such labours of almost crazy love, was an inevitable outcome of the world's changed conditions. Regarded, therefore, as works of art which have ceased to be produced, and which must become every day more unprocurable, the Hawthorns and other hard-paste blue-and-white specimens which in recent years created a *furore* among English collectors, were not unworthy of the homage they received. But from a Chinese point of view, such pieces are not to be placed in the very first rank of keramic masterpieces. The instinct of the French amateurs of former years directed them more truly when it inspired their love of monochromatic wares and of soft-paste pieces decorated with blue *sous couverte*, and the instinct of American collectors has happily followed in the same direction.

It was natural, in view of this appreciative mood of French amateurs, that the first researches into the subject of Chinese keramics should be made by French authors. M. Stanilas Julien led the way with his translation of the *Ching-tê-chên Tao-lu*, or "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics." This work was published in 1856, and has remained since then an authoritative text-book. But M. Julien laboured under a very great disadvantage. He possessed no knowledge of the processes described in the Chinese volume. He was simply a student of languages, competent to render the meaning of an ideograph, but without either the experience of a connoisseur or the education of an artist. Nothing could have been more extravagant than to expect that his interpretation of the *Tao-lu* would be free from error. The book itself, apart from the special attainments its subject demanded, was not calculated to facilitate a translator's task. Compiled, for the most part, in the early years of the present century, that is to say, when Chinese potters were already beginning to lose their ancient dexterity, its author relied upon tradition for the bulk of his materials; and, to crown all, died before the volume was completed. The compilation and publication of the information he had collected devolved upon his pupil, Ching Ting-kwei, who, judged by the account he gives of himself, had little knowledge of keramic processes. One valuable work the author of the *Tao-lu* was able to consult, namely, the *Tao-shu*, or "Keramic Annals," written nearly half a century previously during the reign of the celebrated Chien-lung. But neither the *Tao-shu* nor the *Tao-lu* aimed at furnishing such information as a Western student desires. The object of both alike was mainly to preserve a catalogue of the most celebrated wares with their dates and places of manufacture and occasionally some meagre details of their nature. M. Julien, then, however conscientious as a linguist, could not fail to be misled and to mislead. He was followed, in 1875, by M. Jacquemart, an over-speculative connoisseur, who, great as was the debt of gratitude under which he placed collectors, wrote unfortunately in such a way as to mix the keramics of China, Korea, and Japan in confusion. Taking some of the choicest specimens of Chinese work, he allotted them to Korea or Japan; content to assume, in the one case, that Chinese artists never depicted Mandarins on their vases, and that, consequently, all vases thus decorated must be Japanese; and in the other, that any piece the decoration of which seemed to him to possess both Chinese and Japanese characteristics must come from a country between the two empires, namely, from Korea. Thus wherever Julien had led the public astray, Jacquemart helped to render the aberration permanent. One example is conspicuous: — Julien, falsely rendering a single word, said that the most esteemed variety of the *Kuan-yaô* (Imperial ware) manufactured under the *Sung* dynasty (960–1279) was blue. Jacquemart thereupon wrote, "Le décor le plus ancien et le plus estimé au Céleste-Empire est celui en camaïeu bleu. Il s'exécute sur la pâte simplement séchée après le travail du tournage, et crue; on pose la couverte ensuite, on cuit, et dès lors la peinture devient inattaquable. Dans les temps les plus anciens, le cobalt n'était pas d'une pureté irréprochable; son plus ou moins grand éclat peut donc aider à fixer des dates approximatives. Pour prouver jusqu'à quel

point les porcelaines bleues étaient estimées, il suffit de rappeler qu'on les appelait *Kuan-ki*, vases des magistrats." Now, the fact is that decoration in blue under the glaze retained all the characteristics of a most rudimentary manufacture throughout the *Sung* dynasty; that the colour erroneously translated "blue" by Julien, referred to the glaze itself, not to the decoration, and that the *Kuan-ki* never included ware having blue designs *sous couverte*. The whole import of these misconceptions will be presently appreciated by the reader. Their number, and the very false conclusions to which they led Julien, Jacquemart, and other less notable writers, have contributed to obscure a subject already sufficiently perplexing.

The annals of the Middle Kingdom attribute the infancy of the keramic art either to the reign of Huang-ti, or to that of Shun, semi-mythical sovereigns who are supposed to have flourished some twenty-five centuries before the Christian era. Of these very early wares tradition does not tell anything that can be taken seriously or that need be recorded here. They were doubtless rude, technically defective and inartistic types. At a later date it is stated that Wu Wang, founder of the *Chou* dynasty (12th century B.C.), appointed a descendant of the Emperor Shun to be director of pottery, and in a record of the same dynasty the processes of fashioning on the wheel and moulding are described. The pieces produced appear to have been funeral urns, libation jars, altar dishes, cooking utensils, and so forth. The same annals add that these manufactures were earthen vessels, and that they were called *pi-ki*, or vases of pottery. More than nine hundred years later (B.C. 202), there is talk of another species of ware called *tao-ki* which differed in some respects from its predecessor, and to which Western interpreters of Chinese history apply the term "porcelain." According to this theory, the manufacture of pottery commenced in China B.C. 2698, and that of porcelain between 202 B.C. and 88 A.D. It is to be observed, however, that among Chinese writers themselves some confusion exists on this subject. Julien reflects their bewilderment. Of four ideographs each translated "porcelain" by him, the first, *tao*, is used sometimes generically for all keramic wares, sometimes in the sense of pottery alone; the second, *yao*, signifies anything stoved or fired, and has no more specific signification than "ware;" the third, *ki*, simply means utensil, and is applicable to stone, iron or pottery; and the fourth, *tsu*, is written in two ways, the latter of which, according to some scholars (whose dictum is open to much doubt), was originally employed to designate porcelain proper, though both subsequently came to be used in that sense. When the fact is recalled that even among Western authors it is a common habit to employ the word "porcelain" in reference to baked and glazed vessels, whether translucid or opaque, there is no difficulty in supposing that Chinese writers were at least equally inaccurate. As for M. Julien's nomenclature, the impossibility of relying implicitly on its evidence is shown by the fact that, speaking of a so-called "porcelain" manufactured by the elder of two brothers (Chang), who flourished under the *Sung* dynasty (960–1277), he says that it was made of "une argile brune"; that a variety of the *Chûn* ware (also of the *Sung* dynasty) which he equally describes as "porcelain," was of "une argile jaune et sablonneuse;" and that in other instances the *pâte* of his so-called "porcelain" was of an iron-red colour. Plainly the term "porcelain" cannot properly be applied to such wares, and it becomes evident that both in the original of the distinguished sinologue's translation and in the translation itself, the same looseness of phraseology occurs.

Turning now for information to the neighbouring empire of Japan, it appears that in the middle of the fifth century of the Christian era, a Japanese Emperor, Yuriaku, issued a sumptuary decree requiring that a class of ware called *seiki* should be substituted for the earthen utensils hitherto employed at the Court. Ancient Japanese commentators interpret this *seiki* as another expression for *tao-ki*, the so-called "porcelain" of China. Now it is known that, despite the importation of Chinese wares into Japan which had taken place either directly or through Korea from the earliest times, and despite the tolerably regular trade carried on by Chinese merchants with the neighbouring empire, not so much as one piece of ware to which the term "porcelain" could be accurately applied, reached Japan before the twelfth century. The *seiki* of Yuriaku's time cannot, therefore, have been anything better than glazed pottery, and the same is doubtless true of its synonym, the *tao-ki*, said to have been invented in China at the beginning of the Christian era. In addition to this negative evidence, there are the positive statements of Japanese antiquarians, who unhesitatingly ascribe the invention of porcelain proper to the keramists of the *Sung* dynasty (960–1279). It was then, they aver,—whatever value the assertion may have—that the ideograph *tsu* was first written in such a way as to indicate the presence of *kaolin* in the ware; and it was then that Japan began to receive from China specimens of coarse porcelain, some of which are still preserved and venerated by collectors.

That the manufacture of translucid porcelain in China should have preceded its manufacture in Europe by only seven centuries, instead of seventeen as has hitherto been maintained, will not be readily admitted. Yet there is much to support the Japanese view. It is known that before and after the time to which the invention of porcelain is commonly attributed, the Chinese were in commercial communication with the eastern countries of the Roman Empire, and that they received from thence various kinds of glass which they ranked with the seven Buddhist gems. For this glass — of which there were two principal classes, *lu-li* or opaque glass, and *po-li* or transparent — they paid immense prices. They had no suspicion that it was artificial, regarding it rather as ice a thousand years old, a precious stone second only to jade. By the Japanese, also, it was held in scarcely less esteem. Beads, probably made on the coast near Sidon, were treasured by Japanese Emperors, buried in their tombs, or preserved among their relics. The Chinese supplied the Japanese with glass, and were themselves supplied by the Syrians, but all the while no Chinese porcelain found its way either to Rome or Japan. Its invention was still in the lap of a distant future. Dr. Hirth, in his recently published work, "China and the Roman Orient," says: — "During the Ta-ts'in period (*i.e.* the period of China's commercial intercourse with the Roman Orient), "that peculiar fancy for *objets de vertu* which in Chinese life have at all times taken the place of other luxuries, was not yet absorbed by the porcelain industry, which probably did not begin to assume large dimensions previous to the *Tang* dynasty. Clumsy copper censers and other sacrificial implements, imitating the then archaic style of the *Chan* dynasty, monopolised the attention of the rich, together with the so-called precious materials. A large portion of the latter came from Ta-ts'in, and glass is in all the older records mentioned among them." Had Dr. Hirth written "keramic," instead of "porcelain," industry, there would have been nothing to question in this opinion. The Chinese do not seem to have turned their attention seriously to keramics until, as in Japan four centuries later, the growing popularity of tea, under the *Tang* dynasty (618–907), provided a new function for vessels of faïence. Glass was then comparatively out of fashion. Its composition had become known to the Chinese about 430 A.D., and they already excelled in its manufacture. Thenceforth glazed pottery or fine stone-ware became the national taste, until, in the tenth or eleventh century, porcelain was discovered.

Du Sartel, in his "Porcelaine de Chine," says that under the *Tang* dynasty (618–907), the term *yao* was substituted for *tao* in describing the keramic productions of the era, and concludes that the substitution may be taken as indicating the first manufacture of true porcelain. Neither the fact upon which this inference is founded nor the inference itself can be accepted. As far back as the *Wei* dynasty (220–265), the ideograph *yao* was used with reference to pottery; and in comparatively modern times, when the distinctive meaning of the two ideographs — did any distinction really exist in the sense indicated by M. du Sartel — would have been fully recognised, the term *yao* was applied to *boccaro* ware, which cannot for a moment be confounded with porcelain. It is unsafe to attach much chronological importance to differences of terms and ideographs about which confusion still exists.

There are two pieces of evidence which, whatever may be their real value, seem opposed to the verdict of Japanese antiquarians as to the earliest manufacture of porcelain in China. The first is furnished by the *Cha Ching*, a treatise on tea, written by Liu Yu, in the middle of the eighth century of the Christian era. In this book descriptions are given of various kinds of tea-cups, the merits of which are judged rather by the effect of their coloured glazes in contrast with the colour of infused tea, than by their keramic qualities. Of the best, which are said to have been made at a place called Yueh-chou (now Shao-hsing-fu) in the province of Chikiang, it is related that they were as transparent as jade, and that, owing to the sweetness of their timbre, they were used like musical glasses. The second piece of evidence is the story told by an Arab traveller, Solyman, who visited China in the middle of the ninth century. He wrote: — "There is in this country a very fine clay with which they make vases that have the transparence of glass. Water can be seen through them." This account has been held to indicate the existence of translucid ware; that is to say, the existence not only of porcelain proper, but even of the finest and thinnest description of porcelain. There seems little hope now of determining exactly what was meant by the author Liu Yu or the traveller Solyman. But their language does not necessarily refer to porcelain proper. Translucidity alone is not an absolute proof of real porcelain. Witness, for example, the so-called "porcelain" of Persia, a ware which, by being exposed to an unusual degree of temperature in the kiln, often acquired a certain transparency though his *pâte* remained soft enough to be marked with a knife.

Recently Dr. Hirth discovered two interesting pieces of evidence. The first is a statement by a writer (Tao Yin-chü) who flourished in the early part of the sixth century, to the effect that a substance called *pai-ngo* was then much used for painting pictures. The second is an assertion in the pharmacopœia of the *Tang* dynasty (compiled about 650 A.D.) that this same substance had been employed to make keramic ware during recent generations. Now *pai-ngo* is nothing more or less than kaolin, and Dr. Hirth concludes that the silence of the former writer — a celebrated authority on pharmaceutical and scientific subjects — as to the use of this mineral for keramic purposes, may be taken to prove that it had not yet begun to be thus employed; or, in other words, that the manufacture of true porcelain proper had not yet been commenced. Assuming the correctness of this inference, and combining it with the statement in the *Tang* pharmacopœia, it would follow that the first production of porcelain in China dates from the close of the sixth century of the Christian era. In further confirmation of this opinion, the same writer quotes the following passage from an essay on flower-pots by Chang Chien-tê, published about the year 1620: — "In ancient times no vases were made of porcelain. Up to the *Tang* dynasty (*i.e.* the beginning of the 7th century) all such vessels (for flowers) were made of copper: it was not till then that pottery came into vogue." But Chang's statement proves nothing as to true porcelain and Dr. Hirth's inferences are not conclusive.

From all this it will be seen that little hope remains of arriving at an accurate decision as to the first manufacture of translucid porcelain in China. It seems fair to conclude, however, that although the keramic art was tolerably widely practised from the beginning of the *Tang* dynasty (618), it scarcely emerged from a mediocre condition until the tenth century; that for any purpose higher than the rôle of ordinary household utensils, vessels of glass, jade, or bronze were chiefly employed, and that porcelain did not make its appearance among the keramic productions of the Middle Kingdom until the beginning of the *Sung* dynasty (960 A.D.). By and by, evidence will be adduced to show that Chinese experts, though thorough masters of the processes of porcelain manufacture, deliberately chose fine stone-ware or semi-porcelain, in preference to hard-paste porcelain, for some of their greatest *tours de force*.

Chapter II

EARLY WARES OF CHINA.

IN the following remarks the term "early" is applied to all ware manufactured prior to the *Sung* dynasty (960–1279).

It is recorded that under the *Wei* dynasty (220–265 A.D.) keramic ware for the use of the Imperial Palace was supplied by two factories, but no tradition exists as to the nature of the manufactures. Under the next dynasty (the *Tsin* 265–419) it is stated that a ware called *Tung-ngeu-tao* was produced in the littoral province now named Chêkiang, at Wen-chou-fu. It was green in colour, and much esteemed for the brilliancy of its glaze. A treatise on tea says that the best known vessels of this ware were shallow, with straight rims and spreading bases. The greatest capacity of the vessels is also mentioned: according to M. Julien's calculation it was from $\frac{45}{100}$ to $\frac{6}{10}$ of a litre. The ware was probably green stoneware of comparatively crude technique.

In the *Sui* dynasty (581–618), tradition speaks of a species of green ware called *Liu-tsu*. It was the work of an expert named Ho Chou, or Ho Kuei-lin, President of the Board of Works in the beginning of the seventh century and an antiquarian of established reputation. Ho's object was to imitate a sort of opaque glass (*Liu-li*), the secret of manufacturing which had been lost. He succeeded in producing green stone-ware, for which some have claimed the distinction of having been the first *céladon* manufactured in China, though no reason is apparent for thus differentiating it from the faïence of the *Wei* dynasty. Beyond this meagre account, however, nothing is known of the nature or quality of this production.

Contemporaneous with Ho Chou, that is to say, living at the beginning of the seventh century, was an expert called Tao Yü, a name signifying "keramic jade," and therefore probably derived from the nature of the man's productions. For he succeeded in turning out stone-ware so closely resembling green jade — the Chinese beau-ideal of precious substances — that his pieces were distinguished as *Chia-yü-ki*, or vases of artificial jade. This man seems to have peddled his wares himself, from which fact an idea may, perhaps, be gathered of the insignificance of the industry in his time. His example nevertheless imparted such an impetus to the art that the district of Chang-nan, where he resided, became famous for its keramic wares. Chang-nan was known in later times as Ching-tê-chên, the great keramic capital of the Middle Kingdom. It had already acquired a name for such work. Some twenty-five years before Tao Yü's time, the first emperor of the *Sui* dynasty had ordered (583 A.D.) the people of Chang-nan-chin to send him, by way of impost, vases of the products *yao* and *tsu*, that is to say keramic ware. It would therefore seem that the potters of Chang-nan-chin (afterwards Ching-tê-chên) had become sufficiently expert, at the close of the sixth century, to be distinguished by the receipt of an order from the Palace; that their first keramist of note (Tao Yü) flourished at the beginning of the seventh century, and that his *chef d'œuvre* was green stone-ware, or *céladon*, intended to imitate jade.

At or about the time (615 *circa*) when Tao Yü flourished in Kiang-si, an artist by name Ho Chung-chu was working with success at the same factories. His ware — known as *Ho-yao* — was intended to imitate white jade. It is said to have been made of fine clay, to have been comparatively thin, and to have rivalled its original in softness and lustre. Beyond this there is no record of its qualities. Probably it was stone-ware with fairly manipulated *pâte*, but depending chiefly on the brilliancy and solidity of its glaze. It attracted so much attention that an order was issued for the supply of certain quantities to the Palace.

Coming now to the *Tang* dynasty (618–907), the first keramic production of note is the *Sheu-yao*, a yellowish ware of inferior quality. Japanese traditions describe this as stone-ware of crude technique and inartistic appearance. Its place of manufacture was Sheu-chou in the province of Kiang-nan. A still more meritless ware, which may be passed over without further mention, is ascribed to the neighbouring province of Kiang-si.

During the same dynasty there was manufactured in the province of Chêkiang — which borders Kiang-nan and Kiang-si on the east — the *Yueh-yao*. This is somewhat enthusiastically mentioned. Two varieties are spoken of; the one resembling jade; the other, ice. The colour of the former was green; that of the latter, greenish white. Tradition assigns to the *Yueh-yao* the first place among keramic productions of the *Tang* dynasty. Similar but inferior to the second variety of it was the *Hing-yao*, manufactured in the northern province of Pechili. At its best it had uniform muddy white glaze, compared to ice or silver by the author of an early treatise on tea-drinking. Another contemporary production was the *Shu-yao*, manufactured in the province of Szechuen. The eulogies of this ware are sung by a poet of the time who says that it was light yet solid; that the lustre of the glaze exceeded the brilliancy of snow, and that its timbre resembled that of jade. There is, however, no valid reason to suppose that the *Shu-yao* excelled its predecessors so greatly as to indicate any marked advance in the keramic art. It was probably semi-porcelain at best. One other ware deserves to be included in the catalogue of *Tang* productions; namely, the *Tsin-yao*, manufactured in the province of Kiang-su. Bowls and cups alone are said to have been produced. They are described as pure white, sometimes having fishes moulded in relief or wave pattern incised in the *pâte;* fashions of decoration that occur frequently in choice wares of later date.

The closing years of the *Tang* dynasty being only eleven centuries distant from the present time, it might reasonably be expected that some specimens of the wares of that age should still survive. On the other hand, if the conclusions reached above be correct, no great inducement can have existed for preserving such wares as objects of attractive art or remarkable technique. A few, however, are to be found in the hands of Chinese collectors, and there is no apparent reason to doubt their authenticity. They support in every respect the views thus far expressed. Their *pâte*, not very carefully manipulated, is of dark colour, coarse in grain, and although nearly heavy enough to be called stone-ware belongs rather

to the pottery class, being without timbre and distinctly soft. The glaze is grass green, lustrous but entirely without the depth and richness that characterise subsequent productions of celebrated kilns. The potter seems to have taken shapes and decorative designs from ancient bronzes such as are depicted in the pages of the *Pok-ku Tou-lok* (Illustrated Catalogue of Antiquities). The technique is mediocre, indicating an art not yet enlisting earnest effort, and the glaze shows a tendency to blister in the furnace and subsequently to "flake away" from the *pâte*. This ware is identified by Chinese connoisseurs as the *Yueh-yao* of the *Tang* dynasty. How to reconcile the actual qualities of such ware with the poetic eulogies it evoked is a perplexing problem.

It seems improbable that the potter's art should have progressed much during the five dynasties succeeding one another in rapid sequence after the fall of the *Tang*. The period covered by the five was only sixty years, and during the whole time the country had no respite from internecine wars. To this epoch, however, (*i.e.* the beginning of the tenth century), is referred the *Pi-seh-yao*, or "secret-colour ware." The peculiarity of this name has given rise to some conjecture. M. du Sartel, for example, concludes that the *Pi-seh-yao* was porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze, the term "hidden" or "secret" being used to denote that the glazing material covered the colour of the decoration. This ingenious conjecture seems inadmissible. The name was used simply in the sense of "private," or "manufactured for special purposes." Whether the *Pi-seh-yao* was only an improved variety of the *Yueh-yao* — mentioned above — or whether it was a distinct production, the evidence of Chinese and Japanese writers goes to prove that it was green faïence or stone-ware — *céladon*, in fact.

A more celebrated ware than any of the above is also said to have had its origin under one of these five lesser dynasties — the later *Chou* (954–960). The Keramists of Honan, who at that time enjoyed the distinction of supplying utensils for the Imperial Court, petitioned the Emperor Shih-tsung to designate a colour for the ware thus supplied. The Emperor in reply desired them to imitate the blue of the firmament after rain (*Yu-ko-tien-ching*). The result was the fabrication of a ware called *Ch'ai-yao*, *Chai* being the Emperor's sovereign name. There has been much confusion about the colour of this ware. Julien renders it literally "bleu du ciel après la pluie," a natural interpretation. But there is no doubt that the colour indicated by the Emperor was something much more than "blue," in the ordinary meaning of the term. It was azure of peculiar lightness and delicacy, with a marked tinge of green. Such a colour could not have been produced without great difficulty or with any certainty. It is the tint of the choicest *céladon;* essentially a connoisseur's colour, not to be appreciated by the uneducated eye. As for the nature of the *Chai-yao*, it was faïence or stoneware. The *'Tao-lu* alleges that specimens were often disfigured by coarse yellow clay adhering to the base; a fact showing that the processes of manufacture were still more or less crude. The *Chai-yao* enjoyed an immense reputation. A Chinese poet says that it was thin as paper, sonorous as a musical instrument, polished, lustrous, and remarkable alike for its cerulean colour and the beauty of its crackle. Exaggerated as this eulogy would seem from a modern point of view, the ware unquestionably attracted great admiration at the time of its manufacture; such admiration that, according to a competent connoisseur of six centuries later, the *Chai* dynasty was the first to become celebrated for its keramic productions, and fragments of *Chai-yao* were eagerly sought for by subsequent generations. No specimen survived intact. Probably the manufacture was conducted on a very small scale, and the only representative pieces—those supplied for use at the Imperial Court—were destroyed in the wars that interrupted their production at the fall of the *Chou* dynasty. In fact, of all the keramic achievements prior to the commencement of the *Sung* dynasty (960) little is known beyond what may be learned from very meagre records and from a few scarcely identifiable specimens. The details here given about them have practical interest chiefly for the sake of the general conclusion they lead to, namely, that up to the middle of the tenth century the choicest keramic manufacture of China was stone-ware, or semi-porcelain, having two principal varieties of glaze—*céladon* and white. An ancient Japanese writer, summing up the most celebrated early wares of the Middle Kingdom, says that they may be classified under four heads; namely, "grass-green" ware of the *Tsin* dynasty (265–419); "green of the thousand hills" of the *Tang* dynasty (618–907); "greenish cerulean of the sky after rain," and "secret-colour ware" of the *Chou* dynasty (954–960), and *Ju* ware of the *Sung* dynasty (960–1260). The term "green of the thousand hills" is explained by another renowned Japanese dilettante who describes the colour as "the tint given by the breezes and dews of nine autumns to the thousand verdure-clad hills." In short, it may be confidently asserted that from the days of Ho Chou and Tao Yü, who imitated green opaque glass and green jade respectively, down to the potters of the *Chai-yao*, who sought to reproduce the greenish cerulean of the sky between clouds after rain, the beau-ideal of these early keramists was a *céladon* monochrome, the more excellent in proportion as its colour partook less of green and more of blue, without, however, losing a *nuance* of the former. Another fact established by these records is that the keramic industry was practised over a very wide area. Throughout the belt of provinces extending from Chien-si in the north-west to Chêkiang and Kiang-si in the east of the empire, potteries were more or less frequent.

In view of the references made above to Japanese antiquarian literature, the reader will naturally be disposed to enquire whether specimens of early Chinese ware do not survive in Japan. The collections of the latter country have always enjoyed comparative immunity from the dangers of war or political iconoclasm. Fire has been their great enemy. Many a storehouse of objects of art has been destroyed in conflagrations which, from time to time, sweep away whole acres of Japan's wooden cities. But of her temples some have survived, and among the ruins of others modern research has discovered specimens of great interest. The late Mr. Ninagawa Noritane, one of Japan's most painstaking antiquarians, personally conducted investigations at the site of Bonshaku-ji, a temple in the province of Omi, which was built in the year 786 A.D. and destroyed within a decade by fire. Among the ruins were found shards of hard faïence, covered with three varieties of glaze, light green, grey, and greenish white. These were apparently of Chinese manufacture, and may, perhaps, be regarded as genuine examples of the *Yueh-yao* of the *Tang* dynasty, the principal varieties of which, as stated above, are compared to jade and ice. Theories founded on fragments of ware thus discovered are, however, open to much doubt. More satisfactory evidence is furnished by a book (*Ruishu Zatsuyô-shô*) in which the ceremonials observed at the Japanese Court during the ninth and tenth centuries are described. There is seen a coloured plate showing seven rice-bowls with covers (called *ha-gatame*, or teeth-hardeners) which were used on the first three days of the New Year. Nothing is said of the exact nature of the ware, nor does the plate determine it. But the glaze is light green — a *céladon* monochrome. Yet another and less uncertain piece of testimony is furnished by a celebrated collection in the Shôsô-in, at Nara, Japan. In this collection are articles used in the Japanese Imperial household between the years 709 and 784 A.D. Several keramic specimens of Chinese manufacture are included. They are faïence. The majority have monochromatic *céladon* glaze, but some have two glazes — *céladon* and yellowish grey — run in tesselated or scolloped patterns. The *pâte* is very brittle, and has no pretensions whatever to be called porcelain. Here then are unquestionably authentic examples of Chinese ware potted during the *Tang* dynasty. It may further be presumed that they are fairly representative examples, inasmuch as a very high standard of refinement was observed at the Japanese Imperial Court, and ample facilities existed for exchanging products with the Middle Kingdom. Without assuming that these specimens in the Shôsô-in collection are to be regarded as *chefs d'œuvre* of Chinese keramists during the eighth century, it will at all events be justifiable to infer that the general character of the ware produced at the time was faïence of mediocre quality, and that the favourite colour was green, a conclusion already established, as stated above, by examination of specimens that Chinese connoisseurs refer to the *Tang* dynasty.

Chapter III

WARES OF THE "SUNG" (960-1279) DYNASTY

ALTHOUGH the conclusions hitherto stated have been based chiefly upon written records, and therefore lack the certainty imparted by actual examination of a number of authentic specimens, the student can be reasonably sure that up to the middle of the tenth century the highest achievement of the Chinese keramist was stone-ware or semi-porcelain, and that his glazes were all monochromes, green, white, and muddy yellow, the first two being intended to imitate jade.

Henceforth firmer ground is trodden. Japanese annals and traditions assist, especially as their trustworthiness is established from point to point by a remarkable work which Dr. S. W. Bushell of the British Legation in Peking, recently translated. It is a manuscript entitled *Li tai ming ts'u t'ou p'u*, or "Illustrated Description of the Celebrated Wares of different Dynastics." The author, *Hsiang Yuan-p'ien*, was a writer and artist of renown, who flourished during the second half of the sixteenth century. An ardent virtuoso, he devoted much of his time to collecting choice specimens of the wares of the *Sung*, *Yuan*, and *Ming* dynasties. From the pieces which thus came into his possession and from those in the possession of his friends, he selected eighty-two. Of these he gives pictures, executed with great care in colours and accompanied by descriptions which, though they leave much to be desired, are nevertheless of the greatest value for the sake of both the confirmatory and the original information they afford.

Under the *Sung* dynasty (960-1260) the principal wares manufactured were seven in number, namely, *Ting-yao*, *Kuan-yao*, *Kao-yao Lung-chuan-yao Ju-yao*, *Chün-yao*, and *Chien-yao*.

The *Ting-yao* was first manufactured at a place called Ting-chou, in the northern province of Pechili. There is some uncertainty as to the exact date of its origin. According to the pharmacopœia of the *Tang* dynasty, as quoted by Dr. Hirth, a powder prepared from white keramic ware of Ting-chou was used for medicinal purposes as far back as the seventh century, and it has already been seen that during the *Tang* dynasty Pechili produced two varieties of white ware called *Hing-yao* and *Tsin-yao*. It is possible that confusion may have existed between products presenting so many points of resemblance. At all events, it was not till the *Sung* period that the *Ting-yao* of Pechili came into note. It was then a fine stone-ware or semi-porcelain, having light grey *pâte*. There were three principal varieties of glaze, viz., white, grape colour (purplish), and black. Of these the white was the most important. A work on antiquarian subjects, published in 1387, says:—"Old *Ting* porcelain is valuable if the paste is fine and the colour white and brilliant. Low qualities are coarse and of a yellowish colour. If it has marks as of tears: they may be taken as evidence of genuineness. Specimens having ornamental designs cut into the paste are the most excellent. Plain pieces are also good. Those which have ornaments worked into (or painted on) the glaze are of the second quality. The best specimens were made during the periods *Chêng-ho* (1111-1117) and *Hsüan-ho* (1119-1125); but these are difficult to procure. Brown ware was also made at Ting-chou, and a black variety resembling black lacquer in colour." Dr. Hirth, who gives this extract, quotes further from another Chinese work to the effect that the ornaments of the *Ting-yao* were (1) engraved, or cut into the paste; (2) worked into the glaze or painted, and (3) printed or pressed on with a mould. It will be well to explain at once that the term "painted" is not to be understood here in its ordinary sense. Keramic decoration by painting with colours under or over the glaze, was not practised by the Ting-chou potters. The process described as "painting" probably meant decoration with slip, whether above or below the glaze, but there are no means of determining this with certainty. The general description of the *Sung Ting-yao* is that it was semi-porcelain, with fine, greyish *pâte*, tolerably thin and sonorous, and a creamy glaze, seldom crackled, closely resembling the shell of an egg in colour, but sometimes showing a pronounced tinge of buff. The decorative designs, usually incised in the *pâte*, consisted, for the most part, of the *Fei-fêng* (flying phœnix), the dragon, the peony, arabesques and scrolls. The pure white variety was called *Pai-ting*; that showing a tinge of buff was called *Fan-ting*. With regard to the "tear-marks" mentioned by the Chinese writers quoted above, they were nothing more or less than technical imperfections. When the glazing material is applied by absorption to ware that has already been fired, a uniform surface is easy to obtain. But when the glazing is effected while the paste is still raw, globules or "tears" are not unlikely to make their appearance. That such a feature should have been esteemed by connoisseurs was doubtless because, in the first place, it pointed to times when technical excellence had not yet been attained; and in the second, the tear-marks would naturally occur upon ware of such exceptionally thin *pâte* that manipulation before stoving was difficult. Another point to be noted with reference to the manufacture of this early *Ting* ware was that the cups and bowls were stoved in an inverted position, the consequence being that the upper rims remained without glaze, whereas the bottoms were often completely covered. To correct the unfinished appearance of such pieces, a thin slip of silver or copper was usually applied to their rims.

In the Illustrated Catalogue of H'siang, mentioned above, forty-two specimens of *Sung* ware are depicted. Twelve of these specimens belong to the *Ting-yao* class, six being white; of the rest five are purple, or the colour of ripe grapes; and one is black. From the pictures of these pieces and from the descriptions given by H'siang himself, as translated by Dr. Bushell, it is seen at once that there is question of keramic productions exhibiting an advanced condition of expert skill. If the *Sung Ting-yao* has been spoken of above as semi-porcelain, it is rather because of the softness and comparative opacity of the *pâte* than with any reference to the rank which the ware ought to occupy. It is probable that the manufacture of hard porcelain was within the competence of the Pechili keramists under the *Sung* dynasty, but that, like many of their successors, to be by and by spoken of, they preferred the artistic qualities of a soft, tender *pâte.* Only with the latter as a basis was it possible to produce the lustrous, translucid, and yet solid glaze so much valued by connoisseurs, who compared it to mutton fat or fine jade.

In addition to the white, purple, and black varieties of the *Ting-yao*, tradition says that a red glaze was manufactured. It was called *Hung-ting*. Julien, in his translation of the *Tao-lu*, says that the red *Ting-yao* was much valued, but no specimens of it appear to have survived, nor is subsequent mention made of it.

It need scarcely be observed that genuine specimens of the original *Ting-yao* are very difficult to procure. It was, however, imitated with success in subsequent eras. During the *Yuan* dynasty (1260-1369) an expert called Pêng Chün-pao, whose factory was at Ho-chou in the province of Kiang-nan, distinguished himself by such imitations. His ware was known as *Hsin-Ting-yao* (New *Ting-yao*). It is said to have been exceedingly fragile, so that few pieces are likely to have been handed down to late generations. The *Ting-yao* chiefly known to collectors is a product of the Ching-tê-chên factories during the *Ming* (1367–1644) and early part of the present dynasty. This is not necessarily an imitation of the early *Ting-yao*, being usually of superior technique. The potter of the *Ming* and *Tsing* eras was not so faithful to his models that he deemed it necessary to reproduce their blemishes as well as their beauties. He may have been occasionally baffled by the richness, lustre, and tone of the early glazes, but the wares themselves he could easily excel, and in nine cases out of every ten, the clay required to imitate their *pâte* exactly was not procurable. The *Ting-yao* of Ching-tê-chên resembles the *Sung* ware of Pechili in having tender *pâte*, soft lustrous glaze of the colour of rice-flour (white with a tinge of buff), and decorative designs incised or in relief. But, for the rest, it may be regarded as a special and independent manufacture of great beauty and high artistic quality. Precisely by what characteristics — except excellence of technique and generally harder *pâte* — it may be distinguished from the *Sung* ware, there is no possibility of explaining. The species of *Ting-yao* chiefly manufactured at Ching-tê-chên was the *Fan-Ting-yao*, or " rice-flour " glaze. The grape-coloured and black varieties were not produced, so far as is known.

Among the keramic manufactures of the *Sung* dynasty, a ware of some importance was the *Ki-chou-yao*, produced at Kichou, in the province of Kiang-si. It does not, however, deserve to be separately classified, since it was virtually nothing more than an inferior variety of *Ting-yao*. The *pâte* is said to have been thick and somewhat coarse, but the glaze was rich and lustrous, showing the same white and grape-purple colours as the *Ting-yao*. Associated with its production are the names of a potter, Shu Hung, and his daughter, Shu Chiao, who were noted for their skill. Vases made by the latter were valued, according to the *Tao-lu*, at several ounces of silver each.

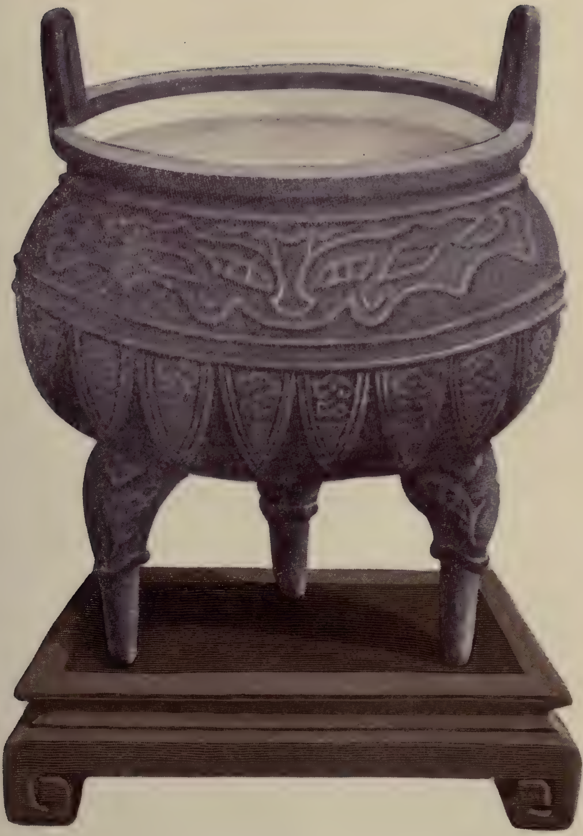
There is some reason to suppose that the celebrated " transmutation," or *flambé*, ware — to be spoken of by and by — had its origin at the *Ki-chou* potteries. For a tradition is handed down to the effect that a batch of vases, which happened to be in the oven just as a high official passed, were changed into jade, whereupon the workmen closed the kiln and fled in trepidation.

In addition to the choice varieties of *Ting-yao* described above, there was also produced at the same factory (in Pechili) during the *Sung* dynasty, a coarser species called *Tu-Ting-yao*, which term literally signifies "*Ting* pottery." The difference between this and the fine *Ting-yao* is that the *pâte* of the former has much greater thickness and solidity, and that the glaze is invariably crackled, sometimes in small meshes, sometimes in large. Occasionally the glaze is entirely without lustre, closely resembling the shell of an egg. The colour of this *Tu-Ting-yao* has a distinctly deeper tinge of yellow than that of the fine *Ting-yao*, and it belongs altogether to an inferior order of manufacture. Considerable quantities of it found their way to Japan, where they were erroneously regarded, and are still regarded, as Cochin–Chinese products. The origin of the misconception is obscure. Possibly the *Tu-Ting-yao* reached Japan in the first place *viâ* Siam or Canton, and was thus associated with southern potteries. At all events, specimens of this so-called *Kôchi-yaki* (*Kôchi* is the Japanese term for Cochin China) are frequently found in Japanese collections, where they constitute a source of persistent error. So far as is known, nothing resembling them in any respect was ever produced at the Annamese or Siamese factories. Dr. Hirth, in his interesting brochure, "Ancient Chinese Porcelain," adduces evidence from a Chinese work (the *Chu-fan-chih*, by Chao Ju-kua) published in the early part of the thirteenth century, to the effect that the nearest of the foreign places to which porcelain was shipped from the Middle Kingdom soon after

A.D. 1200, was Chan-chêng, a district included in Cochin China. It might be conjectured that specimens of *Tu-Ting-yao*, included among these imports, found their way to Japan from Chan-chêng, and were identified with their port of shipment rather than with their original place of manufacture, as was the case with the well known "Old Japan" ware of Western collectors, which, though produced at Arita, was everywhere called *Imari-yaki*, after its place of export (Imari). Against such a theory, however, has to be set the well established fact that there existed, during the *Sung* dynasty, a much brisker direct trade between China and Japan than between the former and Cochin China. Indeed, the very author (Chao Ju-kua) quoted by Dr. Hirth in this context, says that large Chinese junks were engaged, in his time, transporting timber — notably planks of the *Cryptomeria Japonica* — from Japan to the Chinese port of Ch'üan-chou, and it is scarcely credible that these junks, on their return journey, would have failed to bring Chinese keramic wares to Japan, where such objects of art had been held in high esteem ever since the seventh or eighth century of the Christian era. Of course a general inference of this sort does not necessarily include a special product like the *Tu-Ting-yao.* Specimens of that particular ware may have reached Japan *viâ* Cochin China, and thus been erroneously attributed to the factories of the latter. Unfortunately the evidence available does not suffice to elucidate this matter.

It has to be remembered that when the *Sung* dynasty is spoken of there is question of a period of over three centuries. Under ordinary circumstances, great progress should have been made in the keramic art during that long interval. But in 1127 the *Sung* emperors changed their capital from Peking to Nankin, and that event, generally spoken of in Chinese history as "the passage of the *Sung* to the south," resulted in the division of the empire into two Kingdoms, the invading Tartars holding sway in the north, and the *Sung* sovereigns reigning in the south. Tradition says that the change of capital seriously influenced the potter's trade. The factory at Ting-chou in Pechili was transferred to Nan-chang in Kiang-si, and the manufacture of *Ting-yao*, ceasing at the former place, was re-commenced at the latter. This Nan-chang was in the immediate neighbourhood of Ching-tê-chên, the great centre of Chinese keramic industry. But in the early part of the twelfth century the resources of the place do not appear to have been developed, for the *Ting-yao* produced there did not enjoy as high a reputation as its northern predecessor. Connoisseurs distinguished the two wares, that of the northern factory of Ting-chou and that of the southern factory of Nan-chang, as *Pai-ting*, or white *Ting*, and *Nan-ting*, or southern *Ting*. The latter was also called *Fan-ting*, or "rice-flour" *Ting*. The manufacture of the former lasted from 960 to 1126; that of the latter from 1127 to 1279. These dates refer, of course, to *Sung Ting-yao* only. The reader will readily understand that as Nan-chang, or Ching-tê-chên, continued in after years to be the very metropolis of Chinese pottery, its experts did not lose but rather developed, their ability to produce *Ting-yao*. Under the *Sung* emperors, however, it is asserted that the material employed for the biscuit of the *Ting-yao* made at Nan-chang was not so fine or close-grained as that used by the Ting-chou potters. The superiority in respect of delicacy of *pâte* and purity of colour thus rested with the *Pai-ting*. On the other hand, it is certain that technical processes were continually progressing through this long interval, and that the ware of the thirteenth century appreciably excelled that of the tenth in many important features. Chinese authors themselves state that the most beautiful pieces of northern *Ting-yao* were manufactured in the interval between 1111 and 1125; that is to say, just before political troubles compelled the transfer of the factory from Ting-chou to Nan-chang. It is reasonable to suppose that the potters did not leave their technical skill behind them at Ting-chou, and that their work in the south continued to improve as it had done in the north. But there is little to guide in this matter. Practical experience of the *Ting-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty leaves the student completely in the dark in respect of such fine distinctions as *Pai-ting* and *Nan-ting*.

It will be well to pass from the *Ting-yao* to the *Ju-yao* because the latter is said to have had its origin in technical defects of the former. The *Tao-lu* says that the glaze of the *Ting-yao* was often disfigured by fissures and other faults, due to imperfectly prepared materials or unskilled stoving. These blemishes proved so embarrassing and unavoidable that, in 1130 A.D., imperial orders were issued for the establishment of a special factory at Juchou, in the province of Kiang-su. Here the *Ju-yao* was produced. A Chinese writer, whose work was published at the close of the sixteenth century, says that the *Chai* and *Ju* porcelains, though the best of all, had ceased to exist in his time. The same writer's father, however, mentions that in his day specimens of *Ju-yao* were



constantly met with. Its chief variety, indeed its only variety so far as is known, was *céladon*. The primary purpose of establishing the factory at Juchou seems to have been to produce this highly esteemed monochrome. Julien, in his translation of the *Tao-lu*, falls into the error of calling the *Ju-yao* blue. He repeats this same error more than once, and his translation has thus been the means of deceiving connoisseurs with respect to the nature of several of the early Chinese wares. Julien's misconception — originally pointed out by the writer of these pages in 1881, in the *Chrysanthemum* — is alluded to at length in a recent brochure by Dr. Hirth. The fact is that the ideograph *Ching* employed by the author of the *Tao-lu*, may be properly rendered by "blue" in the great majority of cases. Thus the decoration on blue-and-white porcelain of later generations is called *Chinghwa*, and the same ideograph (*ching*) is used to describe the colour of the blue cotton coats worn by the lower orders in China. Julien was naturally deceived, not having the aid of research *in loco* and practical knowledge to verify his opinion. And of course when, in one instance, he had committed himself to the rendering "blue," he adhered to it consistently throughout, although it involved him in such anomalies as "onion-blue." The *Ju-yao* was unquestionably *céladon*. As for the nature of the ware, it is on record that the clay employed at Juchou was red; though there is nothing to indicate whether it was red originally or whether it became red in the furnace — a peculiar property, as will be seen by and by, representative of early Chinese *céladon*. In the *Tao-lu* the *pâte* of the *Ju-yao* is said to have been of fine quality and to have shone like copper, from which and other evidences it may safely be inferred that there is here no question of translucid porcelain. Indeed, the statement may be made at once that all the choice *céladons* of the *Sung*, the *Yuan*, and even the *Ming* dynasties were stone-ware, showing considerable variation in respect to fineness of *pâte* and thinness of biscuit, but never becoming true translucid porcelain. Of course the conclusion is not to be drawn that to manufacture translucid porcelain was beyond the keramic competence of the time. On the contrary, an opaque *pâte* seems to have been deliberately preferred as a suitable basis for *Ching-tsu* (green-coloured) glaze. It is exceedingly probable that, like all early-period *céladons*, that *Ju-yao* had *pâte* which was white except at places directly exposed to the heat of the kiln ; that, in short, its clay, when not protected by the glaze, assumed a red, or red-brown tinge in the oven. Paucity of authenticated specimens precludes absolute certainty about these points. Japanese connoisseurs maintain, however, that this so-called "iron base" is not necessarily found in the best examples of *Ju-yao*, though it does constitute a mark of authenticity in the case of early *céladons* generally. Reference will be made to the point hereafter. The glaze of the *Ju-yao* presented great merits. It was so soft and lustrous that connoisseurs compared it to congealed fat. Its colour varied from a green almost verging upon a blue to white barely tinged with green. Very frequently the surface was crackled ; sometimes it was entirely without crackle, specimens of the latter character being most highly prized. In the *Tao-lu* it is stated that the crackle of the *Ju-yao* was of two varieties. In the first case the surface was covered with a network of close, circular meshes, not inaptly likened by connoisseurs to the roe of fishes: in the second, the crackle assumed an appearance distinguished as the "crab's claw" fashion. Julien's words are: — "Suivant l'ouvrage intitulé *khe-kou-yao-lun*, ceux qui offraient dans le vernis des *yeux* (*boutons*) de *Tsong* (*Aralia*) imitant les raies des *pattes de crabes*, étaient encore plus beaux:" Concerning this perplexing passage M. Salvétat makes only the following remark: — "*Les pièces de* cette sorte sont extrêmement rares." What is to be understood by crackle — if indeed there is question of crackle at all — compared, at the same time, to crab's claws and Aralia leaves? Dr. Bushell, than whom no higher authority is to be found among Western connoisseurs, says that these "crab's-claw" marks, so far from being an embellishment, were imperfections: that they were simply little holes in the glaze, as though a crab had walked over it before firing. How pieces showing such blemishes can have been highly esteemed, one is at a loss to understand. The simile of "boutons de Aralia" has reference to chagrined glaze, something quite different from the so-called "crab's-claw" marking. In the glaze of these antique wares — especially in choice specimens of *Süng Chün-yao*, to be presently described — serrated, or *V*-shaped, lines are sometimes found that have been erroneously supposed to belong to the "crab's-claw" type. These lines are not crackle: they may be better described as dappling. They are not continuous, and it is almost inconceivable that they can have been produced at will. Resulting, probably, from more or less accidental conditions of temperature in the kiln, their effect, nevertheless, is to impart to the surface of the piece an appearance of softness and richness greatly prized by Chinese virtuosi.

In the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang, translated by Dr. Bushell, three specimens of *Ju-yao* are depicted and described. They are *céladons*, having a glaze of "bluish-green" tint. The shapes and decoration are copied from ancient bronzes, designs incised and in relief — scroll pattern, spirals, and so forth — being employed to relieve the uniformity of the surface. To produce the peculiar delicate-green of this ware, the potters are said to have powdered red calcedony and added it to the glazing material. Experience had evidently taught them that this highly siliceous mineral turns white under the action of heat. It is seen from H'siang's pictures that the potters of the *Ju-yao* exercised admirable expertness in modelling, moulding, and graving. Chinese keramists have always been remarkable for such work. The great test of skill at the Juchou factory was the quality of the *céladon* glaze. Its delicate greenish blue colour, lustre, and softness combined with solidity belong to a very high range of achievement. The best specimens are said to have been without crackle, but H'siang's catalogue does not support that dictum.

In the early days of its manufacture certain pieces of *Ju-yao* were stoved in an inverted position, and in order to hide their unglazed rims slender rings of copper or silver were fitted to them. This device, originally dictated by the presence of a defect, subsequently came to be regarded as a distinctive mark, and continued to be employed long after its real purpose had ceased to exist. Allusion is made to the practice in the *Tao-lu*, but the translator, not unnaturally perplexed by so strange a device, misinterpreted it. Most Western collectors have doubtless observed that bowls and cups of early-period Chinese wares generally have their rims protected, or, to speak more correctly, concealed by strips of metal, but few are likely to place much reliance on such a feature as a means of identification.

It is stated in the *Tao-lu* that on the bottom of *Ju-yao* vases flowers of the sesame were "painted." The same criticism applies to this as to the so-called "painted" designs of the *Ting-yao:* the *Sung* potters did not paint their wares by way either of decoration or of mark. The sesame flowers referred to here were either engraved in the paste, or moulded in slight relief under the glaze. Whether they were invariably employed to mark choice examples of the ware it is impossible to tell, but the specimens figured in H'siang's catalogue do not appear to be thus distinguished.

Not less important than the *Ting-yao* and the *Ju-yao* among wares of the *Sung* dynasty was the *Kuan-yao*, or "Imperial Ware." The quality of the ware did not procure for it its distinguished title. It was called "Imperial" simply because the Emperor himself (1107 A.D.) established the factory where it was produced, at Peng-liang or Kai-fêng-fu, in the province of Honan. The clay is said to have been fine, but that it was not a porcelain stone may be gathered from the fact that the rims of the pieces, after stoving, sometimes had a purple-brown tint, and that the *pâte* at the base showed an iron-red colour. It was, in short, stone-ware. Wherever the thickness of the glaze did not suffice to conceal the paste completely, the dark colour of the latter became more or less apparent. In the early days of the manufacture three varieties were produced; namely, *clair-de-lune*, called by the Chinese *Yueh-pai*, *i.e.*, moon-white; light green, and dark green. The first variety did not win public esteem, and after a time the typical *Kuan-yao* became a *céladon*, of various shades of green. The great aim of the potters was to produce that peculiar delicate greenish blue compared to the tint of the firmament between rain-clouds. It will be seen, therefore, that as to colour the *Ju-yao* and *Kuan-yao* potters worked on the same lines. If a distinction is to be drawn between the results they achieved, the verdict will be that the *Ju-yao* showed a more delicate tinge and verged more closely upon the ideal cerulean than the *Kuan-yao*. Moreover, in richness and lustre of glaze the advantage is said to have been slightly on the side of the *Ju-yao*. As a general rule the *Kuan-yao* was crackled. The crackle was large and regular. It is compared by Chinese connoisseurs to the markings of starred ice. In their treatment of this crackle, the *Kuan-yao* potters struck out a new line. For while the piece was still hot, after emerging from the kiln — that is to say, before the cracks had entirely contracted in the process of cooling — vermilion was strongly rubbed over the surface. The pigment thus became permanently fixed in the main crackle, as well as in the fringe of subsidiary and almost imperceptible fissures that radiated from its edges; and in the result the surface of the piece appeared covered with a vermilion network, bordered here and there by little clouds of red. The effect was novel and pretty.

The potters of the *Kuan-yao* adopted the same models and decorative designs as the potters of the

Ju-yao and the *Ting-yao:* they copied ancient bronzes. Throughout the whole of the *Sung* period the same type of shapes and decoration is found. A better choice could scarcely have been made, for the forms of many of the old bronzes are eminently graceful, and their decorative designs show much wealth of fancy.

The number of specimens of *Kuan-yao* produced at the original factory (Peng-liang) was probably not large, inasmuch as the manufacture continued for twenty years only (1107–1126). Those twenty years, too, were in great part occupied by a struggle between the Chinese and the Tartars. The policy of the *Sung* emperors had been essentially one of peace: under their rule the empire attained a high state of civilization at the expense of its martial prowess. Unable to make head against the valour of the invading Tartars, the *Sung* ruler decided, in 1127, to move his capital from Kai-fêng-fu to Hang-chou. Simultaneously with this event, which is generally termed the passing of the *Sung* to the south, the potteries at Peng-liang appear to have been closed, and in their stead a factory was opened within the precincts of the *yamen* occupied by the Mayor of the Imperial Palace in Hang-Chou. The ware produced there was called sometimes *Nei-yao*, or "ware of the palace," but more general *Kuan-yoa*, or "Imperial ware." In all its essential features it closely resembled the original *Kuan-yao*, described above.

Ten specimens of *Sung Kuan-yao* are depicted in the illustrated Catalogue of H'siang. They are all *céladons*, their colours ranging through "pale green," "light green," "onion green," and "bluish green." One only is not crackled.

It is necessary to warn the reader against confounding the *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty with the *Kuan-yao* manufactured during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at Ching-tê-chên. The latter is, for the most part, of an entirely different character. It will be described in its place. Here it need only be observed that the term *Kuan-yao*, in its later use, signified simply "Imperial porcelain," and not a special product of a particular epoch.

The *Kuan-yao*, as the latest keramic effort of the *Sung* dynasty, ought to represent the highest achievement of the era's keramic art. But although in the method of treating the crackle, in accuracy of moulding and in general finish, the ware may be said to have excelled anything previously produced, the fact is recorded that the advantage was with the *Ju-yao* in respect of richness and lustre of glaze and delicacy of colour. To these two wares belong incomparably the finest *céladons* of ancient times.

Dr. Hirth translates the following passage from the *Tao-shuo*, as quoted by the *Po-wu-yao-lan*:—"As regards *Kuan-yao*, it should be known that the porcelain earth found at the foot of the Fêng-huang-shan (Phœnix Hill) near Hang-chou, is red. For this reason 'the foot' (*tsu*, technically that part of the bottom on which the vessel rests when being fired, and which is therefore not covered by the enamel; especially applied to the rings seen on the bottom of old *céladon* vessels) resembles iron in colour. This was at the time called 'red-mouthed and iron-footed.' The term 'red mouth' refers to the brim, or opening, of the vessel: the latter becomes red by the enamel flowing down and away from it so as to be much thinner on the brim than on the body of the vessel, which allows spots of red paste to become visible."

It is convenient to speak here of another ware of the *Sung* period, resembling, in its general features, both the *Kuan-yao* and the *Ju-yao*. This is the *Jung-yao*. Like the *Kuan-yao*, it was manufactured originally at Kai-fêng-fu, in Honan, and subsequently at Hang-chou in Chêkiang. It derived its name from the fact that Kai-fêng-fu was the eastern capital (*Jung* = east) of the Sung. The clay used for its manufacture was fine in texture, but dark. The glaze was green, of various shades, without crackle. The brown rim and iron-coloured base, so common in old *céladons*, appeared in most of the *Jung-yao* pieces. This ware differed from the *Kuan-yao* and *Ju-yao*, being coarser and heavier; features that constituted decided inferiorities. One specimen of *Sung Jung-yao* is figured in the Illustrated Catalogue of H'siang. It has bright green glaze, compared to jade, with floral decoration in relief. Owing to its thickness and solidity, examples of the *Jung-yao* descended to later centuries, and its colour was taken as a model by the *céladon* manufacturers of Ching-tê-chên in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Hang-chou, the Quinsai of Marco Polo, was one of the principal channels of traffic between China and the outer world during the *Sung* era. There can be little doubt that numerous specimens of early *céladon* found their way from it to countries west of the Middle Kingdom. Pieces of the *Jung-yao* produced at Hang-chou, were probably among the number.

One of the most important wares of the *Sung* dynasty was the *Lung-chuan-yao*, manufactured at the Liu-tien factory near Lung-chuan, in the province of

Chêkiang. It is said to have been originated by two brothers, whose surname was Chang. The elder was called Shêng-i (first born); the younger, Shêng-êrh (second born). Each had his own factory. The ware produced by the elder brother was distinguished as *Ko-yao;* that produced by the younger as *Chang-yao.* Originally, the two were included in the term *Lung-Chuan-yao,* but by connoisseurs in subsequent centuries the expressions *Ko-yao* (*Ko* signifies elder brother) and *Lung-chuan-yao* came to be used distinctively. Both brothers aimed at producing *céladons,* the chief difference in their methods being that the older employed crackle while the younger avoided it. This difference must not, however, be invariably looked for. Crackle is found is some specimens of *Chang-yao* — or *Lung-chuan-yao* as it will henceforth be called — but it is never coloured crackle. Shêng-i's ware (the *Ko-yao*) resembles the *Kuan-yao* in having a network of crackle — sometimes fine, sometimes bold — coloured with vermilion, and occasionally with Indian ink, whereas in Shêng-êrh's ware (the *Chang-yao* or *Lung-chuan-yao*) when crackle occurs it is simply untinted fissures in the glaze. The *Lung-chuan céladon* glaze was more distinctly green than the glaze of either the *Ju-yao* or the *Kuan-yao.* Specimens of the last two might doubtless be classed with specimens of the first in respect of colour, but as a general rule the tinge of blue so much esteemed by the Chinese connoisseur did not exist in the *Lung-chuan-yao.* The typical variety of glaze was strong sea-green, often more or less impure in tone. It is singular to observe how M. Julien's persistence induces him to call the *Lung-chuan-yao* "blue porcelain." M. d'Entrecolles, whose long residence and practical experience in China ought to have rendered his testimony conclusive, described the ware's colour as "vert-olive." M. Julien, however, adhering to his original interpretation of the ideograph Ching, writes: — "*La couleur bleue était le caractère dominant des porcelaines anciennes qui provenaient de Lung-chuan.*"

Many specimens of the *Lung-chuan-yao* were ornamented with designs in relief, sometimes copied from ancient bronzes; sometimes consisting of floral scrolls, arabesques, and so forth. Occasionally portions of the surface were left unglazed, and upon the figure subjects — as the Eight Taoist Immortals, the Seven Gods of Happiness, the Kylin or the Phœnix — were moulded in high relief. A very common fashion in this style of decoration was to mould two unglazed fishes on the bottom of a bowl or plate. Incised designs are also frequently met with. In them, as well as in raised designs, nothing is commoner than a scroll of peonies.

The porcelain stone used in the manufacture of *Lung-chuan* ware is said by the author of the *Tao-lu* to have been fine and white. This description applies to the condition of those parts of the stone not exposed to the direct action of heat in the porcelain kiln. When so exposed, the *pâte* became red, or reddish brown, and this change of colour is an essential mark of genuineness. Beautiful *céladons* were manufactured at Ching-tê-chên during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they lack the "red mouth and iron foot" of the true *Lung-chuan-yao*. In the *Kuan-yao* also the *pâte* shows these colours, but whereas the porcelain stone used in the manufacture of the *Kuan-yao* appears to have been red originally, that used in the manufacture of the *Lung-chuan-yao* became red under the action of heat.

Dr. Hirth has collected from Chinese literature the following extracts having reference to the wares produced at Lung-chuan: —

EXTRACTS FROM THE *T'AO-SHUO* (CH. 2, P. 10 *seq.*).

1. — The Ko-yao of the Sung Dynasty.

The porcelain factories of Liu-t'ien at Lung-chuan were originally in the hands of two brothers, natives of Ch'u-chou, whose surname was Chang, the elder of whom was called Shêng-i (*i.e.*, the first born), whereas the younger brother's name was Shêng-êrh (*i.e.*, the second born). Each of the two brothers owned a factory, and the porcelain which came from the factory of the elder brother [in Chinese *Ko*] was called Ko-yao, or Elder Brother's Porcelain, to distinguish it from the produce of the other factory.

2. — The *Ko-ku-yao-lun* [A.D. 1387] says of the old Ko-yao: 'Its colour is *ch'ing*-green of various shades, and it comprises porcelains which have "the iron foot and the red mouth," of which specimens having a good colour may be classed with *Tung-yao*, though there are few to be found at present.'

3. — The *P'ai-shih-lei-p'ien* says: 'When its paste is fine and thin, and the enamel pure and clear, this porcelain is highly valued. Ko-yao will then have short cracks which are called Pai-chi-sui.' (*Lit.* the crackle of the hundred dangers.)

4. — The *Ch'un-fêng-t'ang-sui-p'i* says: 'Ko-yao is of a dead white and has short cracks.'

5. — The *Po-wu-yao-lan* says: 'The characteristic feature of Kuan-yao consists in its having cracks underneath the glaze resembling the claws of a crab, that of Ko-yao in its having cracks like fish-spawn; with the difference that its enamel does not come up to that of Kuan-yao.' (The true significance of the "crab's claw" marks has been explained in the text.)

6. — The *Wu-ts'a-tsu* says: 'Apart from Ch'ai-yao, the

porcelains of the Sung Dynasty, *viz.*, those of Ting, Ju, Kuan, and Ko have been preserved to the present day, but it is only the Ko-yao, of which it is not too difficult to obtain specimens, owing to their peculiar heaviness, which enables them to keep well, whereas it was difficult to preserve the Ting and Ju porcelains for such a length of time.'

7.—The *Lung-chaun-yao* of the Sung Dynasty: 'This is the pottery made by Chan Shêng-êhr, *i.e.*, Chang the younger, and since the porcelain made by the elder brother was already called Ko-yao, while the younger brother continued his factory at Lung-chuan, the old name of this porcelain was Lung-chuan-yao.'

8.—The *Pai-shih-lei-p'ien* says: 'The porcelain of Lunchuan is up to the present day called Chang-yao [*i.e.*, Chang's Porcelain] by the people of Wên-chow and Ch'u-chow.'

9.—The *Ko-ku-yao-lun* (A.D. 1387) says: 'The old Lung-chuan-yao is now called Ch'u-ch'i [Ware of Ch'u-chou-fu] or Ching-ch'i [Green Ware]. Old Ching-ch'i [Green Ware], if fine and thin in paste and of *ts'ui-ching* green colour (Kingfisher's green), is highly valued. There are specimens which are of a pale *ching*-green colour (mealy or muddy green), and there is a variety consisting of basins which have a pair of fishes at the bottom or have on the outer side brass rings serving as handles; they are of thick and heavy make and not very superior.'

10.—The *Po-wu-yao-lan* says: 'The better specimens of Lung-chuan porcelain are able to compete with Kuan-yao and Ko-yao; but there is not much in the way of a crackled surface or a brown paste; and owing to their being thick and solid in make, they can stand a very good deal of wear and tear and will not easily spoil.'

11.—The *Ch'ing-pi-tsang* says: 'Old Lung-chuan porcelain is fine in paste, thick in make, and has an intense onion-green or tree-green colour. The better specimens may compete with the Kuan-yao; but there is not much in the way of a crackled surface, a brown paste, and an iron foot. Moreover, they can stand a very good deal of wear and tear and will not easily spoil. But as the manufacturers were somewhat clumsy, the workmanship shown in these porcelains cannot be classed as representing the ancient elegance in style. When the white paste is so covered with green enamel that, at the places where it is not put on thick, white patches will shine through,— this is the porcelain burned by Chang Shêng of the Sung dynasty, and therefore called Chang-yao; when compared to the [ordinary] Lung-chuan it displays greater delicacy of workmanship.'

12.— The *Ch'un-fêng-t'ang-sui-p'i* says: 'The green porcelain made by the younger brother was pure and clear like fine jadestone and much valued by the world; it resembled the *Kuan-yao* in make. The porcelain made by the elder brother was of a fainter colour.'

Other extracts relating to these wares are also quoted in Dr. Hirth's brochure, but they convey no special information.

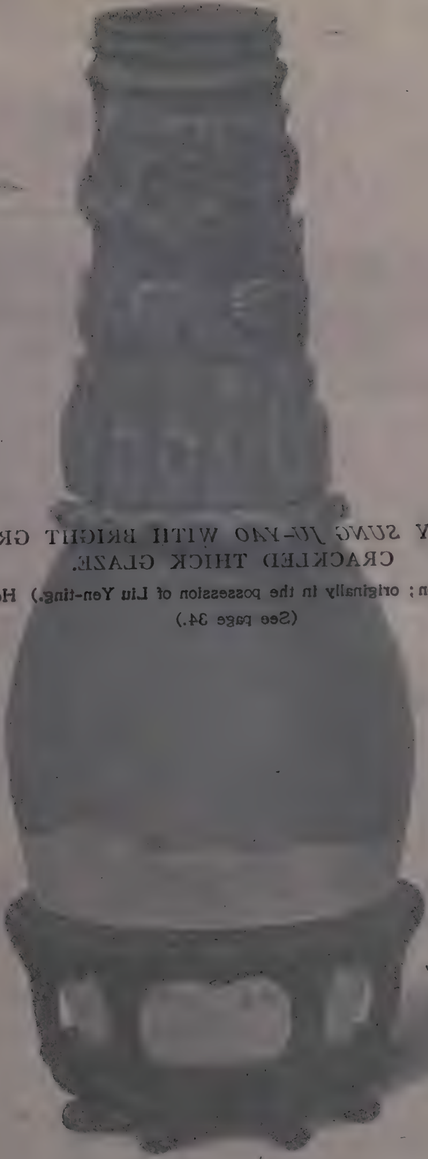
Doubts have been expressed about the date when *Lung-chuan* ware was first manufactured. The *Sung* dynasty covered a period of three centuries, and considerable progress was evidently made in the keramic art during that long interval. To attribute the origin of a factory to the Sung dynasty is, therefore, unsatisfactorily vague. There is only one authority to fix the era of the Chang brothers. A work quoted by Dr. Hirth says that they lived during the Southern *Sung* dynasty (1127–1280), and the earliest *Lung-chuan céladons* may therefore be referred to the first half of the twelfth century.

It is on record that there were two *Lung-chuan* factories. One was at Liu-tien, sixty miles distant from Lung-chuan. The choicest *céladon* was produced there. The second was at a village called Chin-tsun. Inferior specimens of *Lung-chuan-yao* were potted there. Liu-tien stood at the foot of a hill (called Liu-hua-shan), on the top of which there was supposed to be an unfathomable lake.

Among early Chinese wares the *Lung-chaun-yao* bequeathed to later generations incomparably the largest number of specimens. Genuine but inferior examples are procurable with little difficulty. Plates and bowls are most common, but vases, censers and so forth, may often be found. With exceptions so rare as to be scarcely worthy of mention, these pieces are of the clumsy thick variety. Their *pâte* is heavy and dense, well calculated to resist the effects of ordinary accidents; their glaze is olive or sea-green, and their decorative designs, whether impressed, engraved, or in relief, generally consist of floral scrolls and diapers. They owe their preservation to their solidity. "My enquiries among the natives," writes Dr. Hïrth, "have convinced me of one thing, namely, that whereas with regard to many other antiquities it is often difficult to find two Chinese that agree, a most decided uniformity of opinion prevails about this class of porcelain. There is not an intelligent native student (connoisseur) in China who is not able to pick out a piece of *Lung-chaun-yao*, or a *Lung-chaun-ti*, for such is the colloquial designation in the north, from a large collection of similar objects without the slightest hesitation. Further, there is only one opinion as to the age of specimens which are not wanting in any of the characteristics. For, since the paste is originally white, which may be proved by examining a broken specimen, whereas all parts of the surface not covered by enamel have turned red or brown in the fire, we have before us an earth possessing a natural quality not possessed by the produce of other kilns, *viz.*, that of changing colour in the fire. I understand from my Chinese informants that this peculiarity cannot be imitated, not even at

Ching-tê-chên, and that in order to produce the ferruginous ring in other white porcelains the bottom must be coloured artificially. This is one of the chief characteristics, and one of the tests applied by the natives consists in looking for accidental patches or little spots where the enamel for some reason or other has allowed the raw paste to leak out, these spots coming forward against the intentions of the manufacturer, since they reduce the value of the vessel; if the colour of these patches is genuine, like that of the ring, it helps to increase the confidence in its age, which, in all cases, must be of a date prior to the closing of the factories at Lung-chuan and Ch'u-chou." It must not by any means be assumed, however, that specimens of *Lung-Chaun-yao*, even though they present the characteristics enumerated here, necessarily date from the *Sung* era. The vast majority of them probably belong to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For the factories in Chêkiang remained active until about the year 1620. They were not, indeed, always at the same place. At the beginning of the *Ming* dynasty (1368), they were moved to Chu-chou-fu, a town on the same river as Lung-chuan, but about 75 miles farther down, and thus situated half way between Lung-chuan and Wên-chow. Here the manufacture was continued briskly, but the productions lost their old excellence. The manner of manipulating the porcelain stone or its quality gradually deteriorated, and the colour of the glaze lost its delicacy.

During the years immediately preceding the transfer of the factory to Chu-chou-fu, the potters of Lui-tien devoted much care to reproductions of the *Ko-yao*. This was at the close of the *Yuan* dynasty



Ching-te-chên, and that in order to produce the ferruginous ring in other white porcelains the bottom must be coloured artificially. This is one of the chief characteristics, and one of the tests applied by the natives consists in looking for accidental patches or little spots where the enamel for some reason or other has allowed the raw paste to leak out, these spots coming forward against the intentions of the manufacturer, since they reduce the value of the vessel; if the colour of these patches is genuine, like that of the ring, it helps to increase the confidence in its age, which, in all cases, must be of a date prior to the closing of the factories at Lung-chuan and Ch'u-chou." It must not by any means be assumed, however, that specimens of *Lung-Chaun-yao*, even though they present the characteristics enumerated here, necessarily date from the *Sung* dynasty; they rather probably belong to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For the factories in Chekiang remained active until about the year 1620. They were not, indeed, always at the same place. At the beginning of the *Ming* dynasty (1368), they were moved to Chu-chou-fu, a town on the same river as Lung-chuan, but about 75 miles farther down, and thus situated half way between Lung-chuan and Wen-chow. Here the manufacture was continued briskly, but the productions lost their old excellence. The manner of manipulating the porcelain stone or its quality gradually deteriorated, and the colour of the glaze lost its delicacy.

VASE OF EARLY *SUNG JU-YAO* WITH BRIGHT GREEN FINELY CRACKLED THICK GLAZE.

(Dr. Bushell's collection; originally in the possession of Liu Yen-ting.) Height, 19 inches.

(See page 34.)

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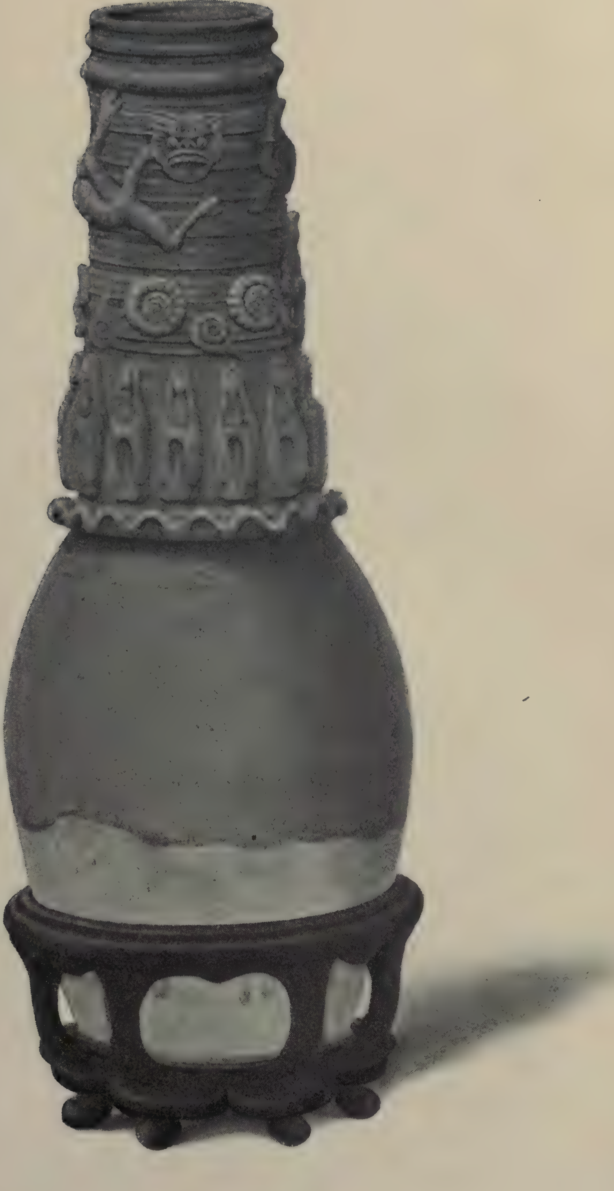


(about 1350). The porcelain stone was procured from Hang-chou, as in the days of the Chang brothers, but it gave a comparatively coarse, chalky *pâte.* A Chinese work, quoted by Dr. Hirth, says: — "To imitate the *Ko-yao* crackle it is impossible to make the iron-coloured bottom. If the imitation has this characteristic, its timbre is bad. Similarly it is impossible to reproduce the pale colour of the original *Lung-chuan* ware. If the reproduction is accurate in respect of colour, it will not ring. This is one of the points in which the superiority of the old ware becomes apparent."

It has been supposed that the *Lung-chuan-yao* was pre-eminently the *céladon* ware of former times. Dr. Hirth has helped to confirm this misconception. Certainly if there is question only of the specimens now procurable in *bric-à-brac* shops or existing in the collections of Western amateurs, one may assert with tolerable confidence that whenever they date so far back as the *Ming* dynasty nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand were the work of the Chu-chou potters. But really choice *céladons* belong either to the *Kuan-yao*, the *Ju-yao*, or the true *Lung-chuan-yao.* These alone are of the highest quality. A fine *céladon* glaze had been the chief aim of China's best potters long before the days of the brothers Chang.

A book called the *Po-wu-yao-lau*, translated by Dr. Hirth, says "*Kuan-yao* as well as of *Ko-yao* vessels there are pieces which have changed colour during the firing (*Yao-p'ieu*) and exhibit figures resembling butterflies, birds, fishes, unicorns, or leopards, inasmuch as the colour in part of the original enamel has by some unaccountable process during the firing, undergone a transmutation into light brown or red brown." There will be occasion to speak hereafter of the *Yao-p'ieu*, or Transmutation ware. Here it will suffice to say that these accidental changes of colour in the kiln, owing to the oxidation of the copper in the glaze, suggested to the early potters a variety of *céladon* much admired and greatly prized by amateurs in subsequent centuries. In this exceedingly rare ware the uniformity of the surface is relieved by metallic spots, distributed with more or less regularity. In choice specimens the colour of the spots is lustrous, golden brown, and they seem to float suspended, as it were, in the velvety green, or bluish green, glaze. Good examples of this spotted *céladon* are practically unprocurable, and the estimation in which they are held, added to their scarcity, gives them an extravagant value. In Japan the ware is called *Tobi-Seiji*. A few pieces exist there in ancient collections, but among the many grand *céladons* presented by the Shôgun Yoshimasa (1490) and the Regent Hideyoshi (1580) to the principal temples throughout the empire, there is not a single vase of the spotted variety.

One interesting specimen of *Sung Ko-yao* ware and ten examples of the *Lung-chuan-yao* are to be seen depicted in the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang. The colour of the *Ko-yao* piece is pale green; that of the *Lung-chuan* examples varies from "dark green" and "deep emerald" to "grass green" and the "bright green of fresh onion sprouts." Only one piece of the *Lung-chuan-yao* is crackled. The forms and decorative designs are borrowed, in almost every case, from ancient bronzes.

To Western eyes one of the most attractive wares manufactured during the *Sung* dynasty was the *Chün-yao*. In point of antiquity this ware ranks first among the productions of the dynasty, but by Chinese connoisseurs at the time (second half of the sixteenth century) when the Illustrated Catalogue of H'siang was written, it was placed at the bottom of the list of *Sung* products. This unfavourable verdict did not, however, receive the endorsement of subsequent critics, and was certainly not admitted by the potters of Ching-tê-chên in the eighteenth century, who spared no pains to reproduce the *Chün* glazes. The factory stood near the city now called Yü-chou, in the Kai-fêng-fu district of Hônan province, where, at a somewhat later date, the celebrated *Kuan-yao céladons* were produced. During the *Sung* Dynasty Yü-chou was called Chün-chou or Chün-tai: hence the term *Chün-yao*. The factory dated from the beginning of the dynasty, that is to say from about 960 A.D. Like other *Sung* wares, the *Chün-yao* undoubtedly improved materially in quality during the three centuries of the dynasty. But as its manufacturers depended entirely on the colour and texture of their glazes, they did not attempt to produce a thin translucid *pâte*. Generally their ware was thick and solid, though well manipulated and having good timbre. It may be described as very fine stone-ware, showing in places a reddish brown tint. The most esteemed glazes were vermilion red (*Chu-hung*) and aubergine purple (*ch'ieh-tzu*). The former was not a brilliant colour, but rather soft and dappled. The latter is compared by Chinese connoisseurs to the purple of ripe grapes. These, however, were not the only colours produced. Moonlight blue (*clair-de-lune*) and green of various tints are also found. The aubergine variety of *Chün-yao* appears to have been a monochrome, but the so-called red glazes were polychromatic, their tints merging happily into each other at the edges while retaining their purity. In this latter class the typical variety had delicate *clair-de-lune* glaze covering the interior of a piece and passing, on the outside, without suggesting any break of continuity, into a colour resembling, but even softer than, that of red hawthorn. The external tint was not uniform, but minutely mottled or dappled throughout, a pleasing play of light and shade being thus produced. In specimens of this class, and indeed in all fine examples of old *Chün-yao*, the *clair-de-lune* glaze is broken by flattened v-shaped marks, through which the beautiful azure of the heart of the glaze is apparent. These marks are much valued by Chinese connoisseurs. Their presence or absence alone constitutes, in the eyes of some virtuosi, the difference between excellence and mediocrity. Anyone who has seen specimens of *Yueh-pai* (*clair-de-lune*) ware must be familiar with the fact that the deeper azure of the glaze gleams out in spaces of greater or less magnitude, recalling the depths of colour seen through breaks in a fleecy sky. This feature occurs in the *Chün-yao*, and its description by Chinese writers of former days has greatly perplexed modern translators. It should be observed, however, that *clair-de-lune* monochromes, though manufactured at Chün-chou, were not greatly esteemed. The combination of *clair-de-lune* with vermilion red ranked much higher. With regard to the green colour of *Chün-yao*, the reader must not suppose that there is question of a *céladon* monochrome. Like the *clair-de-lune*, this green also occurred in combination with red and even with purple. Specimens showing the three colours — cinnabar red, ripe-grape purple, and green of onion sprouts or kingfisher's plumage—were highly valued and must have been very beautiful, but public acquaintance with them is confined to their reproductions in the *Yuan* dynasty (1260 and 1367) and by potters of later centuries.

Among the manufactures of these early times the *Chün-yao* is distinguished by having marks on the bottom of the best specimens. These marks consist of deeply incised numerals, from one to ten. According to the *Tao-lu*, the numerals, "one" and "two," were used to distinguish choice pieces, but Chinese experts of the present day deny this limit, and assert that up to "ten" the numerals were employed indifferently.

In the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang, four striking examples of the *Chün-yao* ware are depicted. Three of these are purple monochromes and one has a reddish brown glaze, the "mule's liver" or "horse's-lung" glaze of fanciful collectors. "Mucus colour," "pig's-liver," and "mule's-lungs" were terms jestingly and perhaps disparagingly applied by Chinese connoisseurs to impure *Chün-yao* glazes.

Dr. Hirth, in his pamphlet on "Ancient Chinese Porcelain," translates the following from the *Tao-shuo* on the subject of *Chün* wares:—"The *Liu-ch'ing-jih-cha* says: 'The *Chün-yao* shows in gradual shades the brilliant effects of all colours, very prominently the *t'su-ssu* pattern and the *ch'ing* (green or blue) colour of a blazing flame.'"

With regard to this *t'su-ssu-wên*, Dr. Hirth says:—

> Julien translates this term by 'veines imitant les *soies* (poils) *du lièvre*,' and others have adopted this much too literal translation; *cf.* Marryat, *History of Pottery and Porcelain*, p. 200: "The most esteemed had veins resembling the fur of the hare." A glance at the passages given under this

head in the *P'ing-tzu-lei-p'ien* (ch. 214, p. 8) shows that *t'u-ssu* is the name of a vegetable parasite, and as such is associated with that of a similar growth called *nü-lo* by the Chinese; it is the plant known to botanists as Cuscuta, or as the dodder in common English. *Cf.* Porter Smith, *Chinese Mat. Med.*, p. 87. I am inclined to think that the metaphor implied in this name refers to a peculiar crackled muster, which is neither the crab's claw muster, nor the fish spawn muster of the Kuan-yao and Ko-yao porcelains, and which may be seen on some old specimens of Chün-yao.

The passage, as here translated, is indeed perplexing. But it is pretty plain that the Chinese author refers not to the colour of the dodder or to any appearance capable of being associated with crackle, but to the variegation of the leaf. The dodder — called by the Japanese *ne-nashi-kazura*, or the rootless parasite — is often spoken of in this sense. What the passage in the *Liu-ch'ing-jih-cha* conveys is that the colours of the *Chün-yao* presented a variegated appearance, like the green and white on the leaf of the dodder, and that the deeper azure at the heart of the *clair-de-lune* glaze gleamed out in places like the steely blue in the centre of a flame. The fitness of this latter simile is easily recognised.

"The *Po-wu-yao-lan* says: 'The highest quality consists of pieces having a colour as red as cinnabar, and as green as onion-leaves and kingfisher's plumage, which is commonly called the green of the parrot and the purple brown colour of the skin of an egg-plant fruit, or of pieces red like rouge, green like onion-leaves and kingfisher's plumage, and purple like ink black, these three colours being pure and not in the slightest degree changed during the firing. Pieces which have one or two numbers on the bottom as a trade mark, and are of a colour resembling pig's liver, since the red, *ch'ing* and green colours got mixed together like saliva hanging down through not being sufficiently fired, are not to be distinguished as different kinds. For, such names as "mucus," or "pig's liver," which are given to this class of porcelain, have been invented for fun's sake. Among these porcelains, those which have bottoms like the flower-pots in which sword-grass is grown, are considered the most excellent; the others, viz., those which have bottoms like ton-shaped censers, Ho-fang jugs or Kuan-tsü, are all of a yellowish, sandy paste, for which reason they are not good in appearance; they have been made in recent years at I-hsing, the paste consisting of a gritty clay, though the enamel somewhat resembles the better class article; but they do not stand wear and tear.'

Refering to the simile of kingfisher's plumage, Dr. Hirth says: —

> To a European eye the tints appearing in old Chün-yao porcelains, besides the reddish colours, are perhaps rather bluish than greenish; but it should be considered that, by the admixture of white and red materials, the exact description must have been very difficult to a Chinese writer. Probably no better metaphor could have been found for the colour described than the plumage of the parrot (*ying-ko-lü*), if we think of the red-tailed bird of a greyish plumage, which is so superior to all other varieties for its linguistic faculties.

Referring to the numbers on the bottom, he says: —

> Julien (p. 74) translates: 'Les vases qui portaient au dessous du pied les charactères numériques, *i.*, (un), *eul* (deux);' eitel (*China Rev.*, vol. x., p. 311): 'Specimens bearing one or two numerical characters at the bottom.' I have, against

my grammatical instinct, adopted the second rendering, since I have seen a Sung specimen bearing the number *wu* (five) as a trade mark. The description given by Fortune (*A Residence among the Chinese*, London, 1857, p. 86) of 'the most ancient examples of porcelain' apparently refers to this class of Chün-yao.

Referring to the caution that pieces showing mixed colours, owing to being imperfectly fired, should not be distinguished as different kinds, he says: —

As is done in Julien's translation (pp. 74 and 75), where seven classes are named, *viz.*, (1) *Mei-tzu-ch'ing* or 'green or blue, like plums'; (2) *Chia-pi-tzu* or 'purple brown, like the egg-plant fruit' (*see* above); (3) *Hai-t'ang-hung* or 'red, like the Japanese pear'; (4) *Chu-kan* or 'pig's liver' (*see* above); (5) *Lo fei* or 'mule's lungs'; (6) *Pi-ti* or 'mucus' (*see* above); and (7) *T'ien-lan* or 'sky blue.' The *Ch'ing-pi-tsang* says: 'Of Chün-chou porcelains the best quality consists of pieces that are red like rouge; the second quality is green (*ch'ing*) like onion leaves and kingfisher's plumage, and brown or purple like ink. Pieces that are of a pure colour and contain one or two numbers as marks on the bottom, are superior; pieces that show mixed colours are in no demand.'

Dr. Bushell corrects a portion of the above renderings. In his review of Dr. Hirth's pamphlet, he writes: — "Dr. Hirth translates — 'Among these porcelains, those which have bottoms like the flower-pots in which sword-grass is grown, are considered the most excellent; the others, viz., those which have bottoms like ton-shaped censers, Ho-fang jugs, or Kuan-tsu,' &c. I would render it, 'Among these porcelains the flower-pots and saucers for growing sword-grass are the most beautiful; the others, viz., the barrel-seats, censers and boxes, square vases and jars with covers,' &c. These things are all well known to the collector of this ware who will give hundreds of taels for a thick saucer, with a number engraved beneath as a mark, if it be of rich 'aubergine' colour. Censer and box always stand together on a Chinese table, the one to hold the incense or chips of sandal-wood burnt in the other." Julien renders the same passage thus: — "Parmi les porcelaines de cette manufacture on regarde comme excessivement beaux les plats sous le pied desquels on a peint un glaïeul." Hence arose a legend repeated by all writers on Chinese keramics from Jacquemart to du Sartel, that a bunch of sword-grass was painted on the bottom of choice specimens of *Chün-yao*. Messrs. Hirth and Bushell have disposed of this phantasy. The only marks on *Chün-yao* ware are deeply incised numerals.

The least known among the productions of the *Sung* is the *Chien-yao*, manufactured at Chien-yang, in the province of Fuhkien. The ware owed its character to the demand of tea-drinkers. Under the *Tang* dynasty (618–907), tea became an article of common consumption in China, and its popularity thenceforth increased so rapidly that a subsequent exponent of its reputation under the *Sung* rulers (960–1279) ascribed to it seven incomparable properties; namely, assuaging thirst, promoting digestion, clearing the throat, dispelling drowsiness, stimulating the kidneys, raising the spirits, and relieving fatigue. Chinese society lived a life too colourless and unpoetical to suggest anything like the graceful, idealistic philosophy of the Japanese *cha no yu*. But Chinese tea-drinkers soon formed a clear conception of the qualities a tea-bowl should possess in order to render the beverage as grateful as possible both to eye and palate. These qualities the *Chien-yao* exhibited in the highest degree. Thick enough to prevent the tea from cooling rapidly, its *pâte* was of such a nature as not to convey the heat of the beverage to the drinker's hand or lips, while its glaze not only offered a pleasant contrast to the bright green of the powdered tea, but was also admirable for its own sake. In truth, the glaze of the *Chien-yao* deserves great praise. On a ground of mirror-black are seen shifting tints of purple and blue; reflections of deep green, like the glassy colour of the raven's wing; lines of soft silver, regular as hair; and sometimes, in specimens of later date, the decoration takes the form of conventional Phœnixes, butterflies, maple-leaves, and so forth, in golden brown of the most satisfying richness and beauty. All these designs and tints possess the same property as that described in the case of spotted *céladon* — they seem to float in the glaze. In short, the *Chien-yao*, though its *pâte* remained always a rather coarse stone-ware, must be ranked, for the sake of its glaze, as a triumph of keramic skill. The most dexterous workmen of later times failed to imitate it. During the past five centuries, cups of this ware have been almost indispensable to the Japanese *chajin*. Before the nation turned, fourteen years ago, from its life of luxurious refinement, a single specimen of the best varieties commanded a price of from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars.

In the *Tao-lu* it is stated that the choicest specimens of *Chien-yao* were generally in the form of bowls with narrow bases and wide mouths. Those in which the black glaze was spotted with "yellowish pearls," technically compared in colour to the fur of a hare, are especially lauded. Examples certainly exist in Chinese collections, but the ware seems to be virtually unknown to the ordinary experts of the Middle Kingdom, and is perhaps more difficult to find there than any of the products of the *Sung* kilns. In Japan, on the contrary, it has always been so much prized and so carefully preserved as to be familiar to connoisseurs and generally present in good collections. During the period of art decay and social confusion that immediately followed the fall of feudalism, a few pieces found their way into the market, but the opportunity thus offered to collectors did not long continue.

A point worthy of note with respect to the *Chien-yao* is that it was one of the very few esteemed wares of ancient times which the potters of Ching-tê-chên do not appear to have imitated either in the *Ming* or *Tsing* dynasties. To what circumstance this distinction is attributable, it is difficult to surmise. The *Tao-lu* shows that the Chien-yang factory was in a flourishing condition at the beginning of the *Yuan* dynasty (1260), but of its subsequent fate nothing is known except that it had ceased to produce ware of the above type before the end of the fourteenth century.

The *Chien-yao* presents two varieties of *pâte*. Both are stone-ware, but while the one is dark and coarse, with a dull timbre, the other is of somewhat lighter colour, tolerably close in texture, and almost as hard as porcelain. The former should properly be distinguished as *U-ni-yao*, or "raven-clay ware." Manufactured in the same district of Chien-ning-fu, in Fuhkien province, it was nevertheless a product greatly inferior to the finer varieties of *Chien-yao*.

The clays for the two were taken, of course, from different quarries. Many pieces of *U-ni-yao* were *céladons*. The *Tao-lo* says that by some connoisseurs they were placed in the same rank with the wares of *Lung-chuan*, *Chun* and *Chang*, while by others they were relegated to almost the lowest rank among the products of the time. The reader may be warned here against confounding the *Chien-yao* of the *Sung* and *Yuan* dynasties with a ware of the same name but wholly different nature manufactured during the *Ming* dynasty (*vide Ming Chien-yao*).

Chapter IV

THE CÉLADON

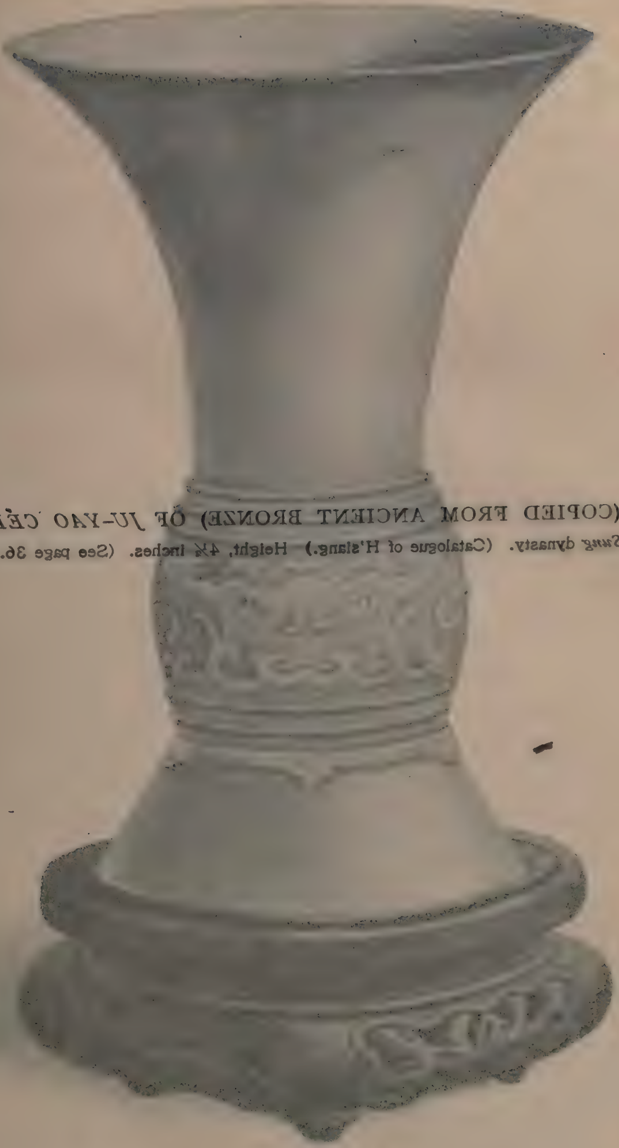
THUS far, this examination of early Chinese wares may be said to have led to three conclusions. First, up to the end of the thirteenth century, Chinese keramic experts, of deliberate choice, preferred *pâte tendre* or stone-ware to hard porcelain biscuit. The latter they were probably able to produce: indeed, some specimens of later *Ting-yao* may be placed in this category. But the former lent itself better to the solid, rich, and lustrous monochromatic glazes so much affected by the *Sung* potters. Secondly, the variety of wares produced in these early centuries of the art's history was not large. With one exception — the *Chün-yao* — monochromes alone were esteemed. The principal colours were green, verging more or less on blue; white, of different shades; purple; cinamon red, and black. These monochromes were ornamented with designs incised or in relief, more or less elaborate, and in the great majority of cases copied from ancient bronzes. Thirdly, among the wares of the period, *céladons* were *facile principes*. The potter's constant and highest aim was to produce the peculiar greenish cerulean glaze which had its origin in the *Chai-yao* of the tenth century.

The term *céladon* was derived from the name of the hero of a novel — d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* — a courtier in rustic dress, who, in the seventeenth century, represented to Frenchmen the type of an amorous shepherd. On the stage this character was always clad in green, relieved by tints of blue or grey, and when specimens of Chinese *Ju-yao*, *Kuan-yao*, and *Lung-chuan-yao* began to come into French collections, the colour of the ware was identified with that of the shepherd's clothes. But long before Europe knew anything of such ware, large quantities of it had found their way to Arabia, Persia, Egypt, Morocco, the East Coast of Africa, Japan, India, Borneo, Ceram, and other places. The majority of such pieces were, of course, the more solid and heavier productions of the Chinese factories, and it is probably to their durable qualities, as much as to the esteem in which they were held, that they owed their preservation through long centuries. Their large numbers and the wide area throughout which they are found has suggested to some writers the idea that China alone must not be credited with their manufacture. Professor Karabacek, of Vienna, is foremost among these theorists. In the writings of Hâdschi Chalfa, a celebrated encyclopedist, who died in 1658, the Vienna savant found a passage to the effect that "the precious, magnificent *céladon* dishes and other vessels seen in the seventeenth century were manufactured and exported at Martabân in Pegu." M. Jacquemart had already suggested a similar belief. Speaking of Persian Keramics, he wrote: —

> *Céladons* are very common in Persia; they have the beautiful sea-green tint of the old Chinese *céladons*, and are to be recognised only by their style. Some are simply gadrooned

or fluted, others have ornaments in relief in good taste. Pétis de la Croix mentions another coloured porcelain in his translation of the "Thousand and One Nights," — the Martabani. "Six old slaves," he writes, "less richly dressed than those who were seated, immediately appeared; they distributed mahramas [blue squares of stuff used to wipe the fingers], and served shortly afterwards, in a large basin of martabani [green porcelain], a salad composed of whey, lemon-juice, and slices of cucumber." Chardin cites a green porcelain, which seems to be the same. He writes: "Everything at the king's is of massive gold or porcelain. There is a kind of green porcelain so precious that one dish alone is worth four hundred crowns. They say this porcelain detects poison by changing colour, but that is a fable: its price arises from its beauty and the delicacy of the material, which renders it transparent, although above two crowns in thickness." This last peculiarity has a great importance. It is impossible to suppose travellers would here allude to the sea-green *céladon* of which we have spoken above; this, laid upon a brown, close paste, approaching stone-ware, is never translucent. In the martabani, on the contrary, a thin, bright green glaze is applied upon a very white biscuit, which allows the light to appear through. It is most wonderful that a material so esteemed, and of so high a price, is not more common in our collections. Its name, on the other hand, leaves no doubt of its Persian nationality. Martaban (Mo-tama) is one of the sixteen states which composed the ancient kingdom of Siam; it may not be impossible, then, that we must restore to this kingdom the porcelain mentioned in the Arabian story. (Dr. Hirth's translation.)

M. Jacquemart's description of the *martabani* is imaginative. His difficulty in attributing transparency to any specimen of Chinese *céladon* would have disappeared had he remembered that among *céladons* (to be presently spoken of) manufactured at Ching-tê-chên during the *Ming* period, many had a genuine porcelain *pâte* and were translucid. As for the theory that ware of this nature found in the countries influenced by Arab civilisation is to be attributed to Siam, it has little if anything to support it. The dense stone-ware, with its full coloured enamel, produced in Siam during the past two or three centuries, is well known to connoisseurs, and there is no evidence that the keramic art of the country flourished notably in other directions at earlier periods. Recent researches, conducted by Sir Ernest Satow, C.M.G., then British Representative in Bangkok, at the request of the writer, do indeed go to show that *céladon* was among the ancient products of Siam. The great scarcity of old specimens in the market interfered with Mr. Satow's attempts, but in December, 1885, when on a tour in northern Siam, he visited a ruined city called Sawauk-halôk. More than five centuries ago a keramic manufactory existed in this city. Chinese workmen were employed there and possibly Chinese materials were sometimes used. Nothing now survives of the town but the fragmentary walls of Buddhist temples and the remains of the kiln. In the vicinity of the latter pieces of pottery are dug up from time to time. Mr. Satow secured three of them. They are evidently failures in baking, which were rejected as useless, and their condition alone, apart from other evidence, furnishes an almost conclusive argument against the probability of their having been imported from China in recent times and carried 400 miles to a ruined city never visited by any Western previously to Mr. Satow's tour. Among these three fragments was the body of a vase, now in the possession of the writer. Its *pâte* is coarse, reddish grey stone-ware, essentially different from the characteristic clay of Chinese *céladon*. But the glaze might easily be mis-



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VASE (COPIED FROM ANCIENT BRONZE) OF *JU-YAO* CÉLADON.

Sung dynasty. (Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 4⅛ inches. (See page 36.)

taken for a manufacture of the Middle Kingdom. It is light green, passing almost into white. The interior portion of the vase is vertically fluted, and the glaze in the interstices of the flutes assumes the aspect of green streaks. The upper portion is decorated with horizontal flutes and bands, between which are incised leaf scrolls. The piece is artistic, the quality of the glaze good, and the technique of more than medium quality. From this specimen of Siamese ware, manufactured probably in the fourteenth century directly under Chinese instruction, it is possible to judge Siamese capacities in respect of *céladon* in early times, and to conclude that, though Siam may unquestionably have furnished some of the *céladons* found in the former Arab possessions, the portion attributable to her is probably very small, and the pieces may easily be distinguished from their Chinese contemporaries and predecessors by the *pâte*. This is reddish grey, or light brown, and presents a glistening, crude appearance — not unlike that of half-burned tiles — which offers no resemblance to the reddish brown, dense, and close-grained biscuit of the Chinese ware. Dr. A. B. Meyer, as quoted by Dr. Hirth, ably describes the general type of *céladon* found from Egypt to Borneo: —

> The *céladon* porcelain is extremely heavy. It is of a light green colour, and I believe that, in selecting this hue, the makers intended to imitate the colour of jadestone, and that this was the reason why it was so much appreciated. The articles which have been found in various countries between the island of Ceram on the one hand and Africa on the other, consist in dishes measuring up to about half a metre, covered by green enamel all over with the exception of a ring on the bottom, 1 to 2 centimetres in breadth and from about 10 to 15 centimetres in diameter, and being red-

brown in colour. The paste consists of white porcelain, but it appears that the red-brown colour of the ring has its origin in certain changes of colour produced on the surface of the paste in such parts as are not covered by the enamel, that is, the ring on which the vessel stood while being fired. The ring on the bottom is characteristic of these old *céladons*, and so is the heaviness and the colour. The musters are of all possible kinds. Thus, for instance, the fluted pattern is often seen. It is, like all ornaments shown in these porcelains, produced by first impressing or engraving it on the paste previous to the enamelling. By putting on the enamel, the concave parts of the surface, representing the pattern, were filled up deeper with this semi-transparent material than the plain parts of the surface, for which reason the white paste shines through in brighter tints where the enamel is thin, whereas the pattern appears in a somewhat darker shade. I have seen the lotus flower in the middle of these dishes, or the fish ornament, or some sort of a checkered pattern spread over the whole surface. These dishes never bear a mark underneath the enamel; it appears therefrom that they were made at a time when the custom of marking the period of manufacture did not yet exist.

It is a point of some interest to ascertain how Chinese *céladons* found their way in these early days to almost all the countries included in the region between Japan and the Key Islands. Dr. Hirth has investigated the subject with infinite pains and wide reference to sources of information. The results of his researches may be summarized here, as embodied in a pamphlet published in 1888 in Shanghai.

In the thirteenth century there were two important channels of traffic from the keramic centres of the Middle Kingdom to the outer world. The termini of these channels were at Hang-chow, the capital of Chêkiang (spoken of by Marco Polo under the name of "Quin-sai") and at Zaitun, a place about the exact position of which opinions differ, some sinologues placing it at Ch'üan-chou-fu, others at Chang-chou-fu with its port of Geh-kong, and others again interpreting the word to signify Amoy waters generally. It does not greatly matter which hypothesis be accepted. The important point is that a large outward commerce was carried on from both places, and that each was easily accessible from Lung-chuan, where quantities of *céladon* were manufactured at the close of the *Sung* dynasty. Lung-chuan, though now a poor, comparatively resourceless district, was then a place of considerable wealth, with fine roads in its neighbourhood and brisk tradal connections. Marco Polo, speaking of Zaitun, says: — "The river that flows by the port of Zaitun is large and rapid, and a branch of that which passes the city of Quinsai (Hang-chow). At the place where it separates from the principal channel stands the city of Ting-ui. Of this place there is nothing further to be observed than that cups or bowls and dishes of porcelain ware are there manufactured." Hugh Murray and Colonel Yule supposed that by "Ting-yui" Marco Polo meant Ching-tê-chên. But Dr. Hirth has ingeniously shown that, in all probability, Ting-ui was no other than Lung-chuan, which during the *Sung* dynasty was called "Chien-chuan," a name that becomes *Tindji* in the Shanghai dialect. Dr. Hirth seems to attach undue importance to this identification, owing to his apparent belief that practically all the early Chinese *céladons* were manufactured at Lung-chuan, whereas it has been shown above that the finest types of such ware belonged to the *Ju-yao* and *Kuan-yao*. The specimens exported were undoubtedly of the commoner class for the most part. Their solidity made them easily portable, and their cheapness offered a further inducement. Ibn Batuta, describing how porcelain — so-called — was sent from China to India, and how it passed from country to country until it reached Morocco, says that in China it commanded about the same price as earthenware in Arabia. Much valuable information about the export trade from China in the thirteenth century is given by Chao Jukua, an author to whose works Dr. Hirth has been the first to call attention. He held the post of inspector of foreign trade and shipping in the maritime province of Fuhkien, about the year 1220, and in that capacity he compiled a work called "Annals of the various Districts" (*chu-fan-chih*), which was happily embodied in the encyclopedia of the *Ming* Emperor Yung-lo (1403–1425), and thus preserved to later generations. In the days of this author, the city of Ch'üan-chou-fu in Fuhkien was the principal mart of China's foreign commerce. Thence the products of the Kingdom were exported to Borneo, to Cochin-China, to Java, to Sumatra, to Malabar, to Zanzibar, to Persia, to Japan, to Mecca, to Ceylon, to India, and to various other places. The nearest market was Borneo. Junks from Ch'üan-chou-fu proceeded direct to Bruni, on the north-west coast of that island, then a city of more than ten thousand inhabitants, its ruler attended by a numerous suite, and its safety guaranteed by soldiers wearing copper armour, with a fleet of over a hundred vessels. The arrival of a foreign ship was an occasion of much ceremony at Bruni. The king visited the ship, reaching it by a gangway covered with silk brocade, and an interchange of costly civilities took place during about a month before the question of trade might be broached. Ultimately the Court regulated the conditions under which commerce should be conducted and determined the prices to be paid. Despite all this luxury, the household use of keramic utensils had not yet become habitual. Joints and leaves of the Palmyra palm served for dishes and cups which were thrown away after the meal was finished. Soon, however, the products of the Chinese kilns began to be appreciated. Chao Jukua, in his list of articles sent to Bruni — as gold and silver coins, brocades of Chien-yang and other silks, deer's horns, glass beads and glass bottles, bangles, rouge, lacquered bowls and plates — mentions "vessels of green keramic ware," and elsewhere says that "white ware" was exchanged for incense, laka wood, yellow wax, and tortoise-shell produced in islands in the vicinity of Bruni. Constant importations of these keramic specimens gradually changed the habits of the people until, as described in Chinese annals of the sixteenth century, they freely employed porcelain utensils, and for wooden coffins in burying their dead substituted Chinese jars "having dragons represented on their outer surface." Marryat, in his *History of Pottery and Porcelain*, quotes the following from Low's *Sarawak:* —

> Among the Dyaks are found jars held by them in high veneration, the manufacturers of which are forgotten; the smaller ones among the land and sea Dyaks are common. They are called Nagas, from the Naga, or dragon, which is rudely traced upon them. They are glazed on the outside, and the current value of them is 40 dollars; but those which are found among the Kyan tribes, and those of South Borneo, and among the Kadyans and other tribes of the north, are valued so highly as to be altogether beyond the means of ordinary persons, and are the property of the Ma-

layan Rajahs, or of the chiefs of the native tribes. I never had an opportunity of seeing one of these valued relics of antiquity, but am told that, like the Nagas, they are glazed, but larger. They have small handles round them, called ears, and figures of dragons are traced upon their surface; their value is about 2,000 dollars. In the houses of their owners they are a source of great profit; they are kept with pious care, being covered with beautiful cloths. Water is kept in them, which is sold to the tribe, and valued on account of the virtues it is supposed to possess, and which it derives from the jar which has contained it. By what people these relics were made, and by what means they have been thus distributed and the veneration for them so widely spread, cannot be at this time determined. Some of the jars were sent from Banjor Massim to China by the Dutch, who hoped to make a profitable speculation by their credulity; but the artists of that country could not, though famed for their imitative powers, copy these with sufficient exactness to deceive the Dyaks, who immediately discovered they were not those they esteemed, and consequently set no value upon them. From their price, it is presumed that these jars are very rare.

This statement of Low's that the Chinese of later times were not able to reproduce the *céladons* of the *Sung* period, will be explained when the subsequent history of the manufacture is considered. As for the taste educated among the people of Borneo by gradual acquaintance with Chinese wares, Mr. Carl Bock's description of Dyak life, in *The Head-Hunters of Borneo*, conveys a good idea:—

Chairs and tables form no part of the furniture of an ordinary Dyak's house. . . . In a corner, near the fireplace, will generally be found stored a collection of crockery ware, for the Dyak is something of a china-maniac, and belongs to the modern æsthetic school, setting great store by the china vessels which he procures in exchange for the various products of the country from the Malay merchants, who again have purchased them from the Chinese traders at Singapore or Macassar.

The Dyak representative of the blue-china school, however, goes beyond the European devotee in his veneration of old crockery. Among his greatest treasures are a series of *gudji blanga*, a sort of glazed jar imported from China, in green, blue, or brown, ornamented with figures of lizards and serpents in relief. These pots are valued at from 100 florins to as much as 3,000 florins (8*l.* to 240*l.*) each, according to size, pattern, and above all, old age combined with good condition. According to the native legend, these precious vases are made of the remnants of the same clay from which "Mahatara" (the Almighty) made first the sun, and then the moon. Medicinal virtues are attributed to these urns, and they are regarded as affording complete protection from evil spirits to the house in which they are stored. A very full account of the various legends connected with these *gudji blanga* is given in Mr. W. H. T. Perelaer's most interesting work, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajaks," pp. 112–120. That author, however, gives them different names, the nearest of approach to that by which I have always heard them called being *Balanga*.

This China craze among the Dyaks has proved, as in England, an excellent opportunity for the exercise of John Chinaman's skill; and very clever imitations of old vases, with cracks, chips, age-stains, and other indications of antiquity, most exactly reproduced by them, are offered for sale at Samarinda at five florins each; but, unlike many London connoisseurs, your Dyak is never taken in by these spurious *gudji blangas*, preferring to give hundreds of guilders for a real specimen. Each true plastic relative of the sun and moon has its pedigree, which is passed down from generation to generation.

Borneo, however, offered but a small market, comparatively speaking, for the keramic productions of the Middle Kingdom. Its interest in this context centers in the fact that its story supplies a strong confirmation of the conclusions recorded in previous chapters as to the true nature of early Chinese wares.

Concerning the other countries to which such wares were exported, Dr. Hirth extracts many details from Chao Jukua's work. In Cochin China, as well as in Cambodia, the local products were exchanged against Chinese "porcelain," umbrellas, gauze fans, lacquered wares, *samshu*, and sugar. In Java, which was within a month's sail of Ch'üan-chou-fu, *viâ* the Straits of Lingas, the pepper of the country was purchased with imitation gold and silver, with silks, damasks, drugs, cinnabar, alum, borax, lacquered ware, iron tripods, and "green and white porcelain." At Palembang in Sumatra there was a depôt of Chinese products and manufactures, where "gold, silver, porcelain, silk piece-goods, sugar, iron, *samshu*, ginger, rhubarb, and camphor" were stored for sale to Arab traders, who carried them to India, Africa, and Western Asia. This depôt seems to have existed from the *T'ien-yu* period of the *Tang* dynasty (904–907). At Lambri, in the north-west of Sumatra, "the last station before one enters the Indian Ocean in travelling from Sumatra to Ceylon," another depôt existed. Here, although "porcelain" was imported, it was doubtless intended for re-export chiefly, as the people are said to have eaten their meals from their hands and used household utensils of copper. From Lambri Chinese junks pushed on to Coilam, on the coast of Malabar, though this distant voyage does not seem to have been regularly undertaken. It is, however, distinctly stated that the products of Malabar were exchanged at Palembang against flower-tanks (probably of pottery), silks, "porcelain," camphor, rhubarb, cloves, etc. Chao Jukua, as translated by Dr. Hirth, says:—"The country of Ts'eng-po (Zanzibar) is on an island in the south of Hu-ch'a-la (Guzerate). In the west it is bounded by large hills; its inhabitants are of Arab descent and observe the rites of the Mohammedan religion; shey wear blue cotton cloth and shoes of red leather; their daïly food consists of rice or flour cakes and roasted mutton. Their villages are mostly built terrace-shape in the ravines of wooded hills. The climate is warm, and there is no cold season. The products are elephants' teeth, raw gold, ambergris, and yellow sandal-wood. Every year the country of Hu-ch'a-la and the settlements on the sea-coast of Arabia send out ships to barter with this country (China), the articles of exchange being white cloth, porcelain, copper, and red cotton." The "porcelain" here spoken of was brought from Ch'üan-chou-fu to Guzerat by way of Palembang.

Among the countries to which China sold her keramic productions at this early epoch, she had no keener customer than Japan. It has already been noted that a brisk trade in Japanese lumber was carried on at Ch'üan-chou-fu in the days of Chao Jukua (1220). That author speaks of the *Lo* tree (Japanese *Sugi*, the well-known *cryptomeria Japonica*) as "attaining a height of from fourteen to fifteen *ch'ang*, and measuring fully four Chinese feet in diameter." Planks of this valuable timber were carried by Japanese junks to Ch'üan-chou, and it may be taken for granted that keramic wares formed part of their return cargoes. The Imperial Collection preserved at Nara teaches that, as long ago as the eighth century, Chinese glazed pottery was among the apparatus of Japanese aristocratic life. But of ware capable of being classed with either the *Ju-yao*, the *Kuan-yao*, or the *Lung-Chuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, no specimens in Japanese possession can be confidently traced farther back than the fifteenth century, that is, to say, two hundred years subsequent to the time when Chao Jukua wrote. This uncertainty, however, must not be taken as indicating that no such specimens had found their way to Japan. It is a question simply of traditional and historical deficiencies. What is beyond doubt is that so soon as the Regent Yoshimasa's (1490) cultivation of the tea ceremonials turned popular fancy into the direction of dilletanteism, a part of the best outcome of the Chinese factories was diverted to Japan. The luxurious old ruler did not allow political conventionalities to interfere with the gratification of his new hobby. When he wanted a specimen of this or that ware, he despatched a special envoy to the Middle Kingdom, ostensibly to convey Japan's good wishes to its rulers, but really to bring back the coveted piece. Among these importations was a vase in shape and size closely resembling a fuller's mallet (Japanese *kinuta*). It was of fine clay, whiter and harder than the *pâte* of previous specimens, and the colour of its perfectly uniform, velvety glaze was greenish blue of wonderful depth and delicacy. To Japanese connoisseurs this piece seemed to stand at the summit of keramic skill. After it had remained for a time in Yoshimasa's collection at Higashi-yama, it was placed among the treasures of the Temple of Tōdaiji, whence, more than a century later, it passed into the possession of Iyeyasu, the great founder of the Tokugawa Dynasty. There is a tradition that this prince, being in need of funds for military purposes, pledged the wonderful vase for a sum of ten thousand pieces of gold, or about a hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling. At any rate, the specimen was unanimously elevated to the rank of a standard, and thenceforth the best pieces of *céladon* were designated *Kinuta-Seiji*. At about the same time, another variety, of scarcely inferior quality, made its appearance. Its *pâte* and lustre were equal to those of the *Kinuta* class, but the colour was a little deeper, and many of the specimens had designs in relief or incised. The pattern held in the highest favour represented a scroll of peonies, but choice pieces, both in this and the former variety, were also distinguished by two fishes on the bottom, in high relief. This ware received the name of *Tenriu-Seiji*, in allusion to the fact that the first vase which came to Japan was presented to the Temple of *Tenriu*. A third variety — the sea-green of Western collectors — had coarse *pâte*, deeper and less delicate colour, and thicker glaze than either the *Kinuta* or *Tenriuji*. This was called the *Shichi-kan-Seiji*, a name derived from the rank of an official who first imported it into Japan. It is distinguished from the more prized varieties by its fuller green tint as well as by its greater solidity and heaviness.

Many are the pieces of *céladon* that have been handed down, as priceless heirlooms, from generation to generation in Japanese families. One, which still forms the gem of a well-known nobleman's fine collection, is the *Chidori no koro*, or Peewit Censer. Originally the property of the Regent Yoshimasa, it afterwards came into the possession of Hideyoshi, the *Taikô*, whose life it is said to have saved by a miraculous power of uttering a warning cry when danger was at hand. The legend relates that supernatural quality was firmly credited by the men of the time, and that the prince of Japanese robbers, Ishikawa Goemon, entering the *Taikô's* chamber with the intention of assassinating him, silenced the censer by muffling it in an an equally miraculous tabard. Such fables show in what degree of estimation a choice piece of *céladon* was held by mediæval Japanese, and how highly their appreciative sense was educated. This marvellous censer was a tiny cylindrical vase, about four inches high and as many in diameter. It had only three beauties, perfect uniformity of glaze, a wonderful colour, and the lustre of a gem. Yet it inspired its first owner with such poetic admiration that, carrying it home in his bosom and hearing the musical note of the peewit sounding over a moon-lit moor, it seemed to him a fitting thing to call the peerless censer after the solitary, soft-voiced bird.

The number of fine *céladons* remaining in Japanese collections is very great. Scarely a temple of note is without some example of the ware, whether vase or censer. Among these, however, the majority cannot safely be referred to factories of earlier date than the *Yuan* (1279–1368) or *Ming* (1368–1644) dynasty. It is, indeed, scarcely possible to distinguish between two specimens of *Lung-chuan-yao* dating respectively from the *Sung* and the *Ming* dynasty. The manufacture of the *Ju-yao* and original *Kuan-yao céladons* ended with the *Sung* era, but the manufacture of the *Lung-chuan-yao* continued at the Liu-tien and Chin-tsun kilns throughout the *Yuan* dynasty, and at Ch'u-chou-fu, in the same province of Chê-kiang, throughout a considerable portion of the *Ming* dynasty. At these same factories imitations of the *Ju-yao* and *Kuan-yao* were also made, and there is no reason to think that they differed greatly from their originals. Unfortunately, no accurate information is obtainable as to the time when the factory at Ch'u-chou-fu ceased to be active. The date may, however, be approximately fixed at the early part of the sixteenth century. Up to that time the characteristic iron-red *pâte* and thick, lustrous glaze of the *Lung-chuan-yao* were produced without much difficulty. A little later, during the *Wan-li* era (1573–1619), there flourished an expert nicknamed Hu-kung (Mr. Pots), or Hu-yin-tao-jên (the Taoist hidden in a pot), whose reproductions of the *Kuan-yao* and *Ko-yao céladons* of the *Sung* dynasty enjoyed considerable reputation. He appears to have shown some want of strength in respect of crackle, but his work was sufficiently excellent to make his name remembered, a fact from which it may safely be inferred that the manufacture of *céladons* of the old type had ceased to be carried on successfully before his time. Tradition says that he marked his pieces *Hu-yin-tao-jên*, but if this be so they must have been at once distinguishable from their prototypes.

Contemporaneous with, or perhaps a little earlier than, Hu-kung, an artist named Ngeu, who worked at the factory of Yi-hsing (a place situated on the western shore of the Tai-wu Lake, some few miles inland from Shanghai), is recorded as having imitated the ancient *Ko-yao* and *Kuan-yao céladons*. His ware was known as *Ngeu-yao*.

Neither of these manufactures possesses much practical interest except as showing that, at the close of the sixteenth century, *céladons* of the recognised class had become so difficult of production that skilled artists acquired permanent fame by imitating them. It is not to be supposed, of course, that the Ch'u-chou-fu potters had lost all their old ability. Doubtless they could still produce *Lung-chuan-yao* of the ordinary variety. But such *tours de force* as the delicate colours of the Chang brothers and of the *Kuan-yao* and *Ju-yao*, being to a great extent dependent upon individual expertness, had ceased to make their appearance in the market, and the connoisseurs of the *Ming* dynasty had learned to be so exacting that the comparatively heavy, impure monochromes of the Ch'u-chou factory no longer found favour in their eyes. It may be concluded that the ordinary class of *céladons* preserved in Japanese collections, as well as those to be found throughout the area of mediæval commerce described above, and finally the not infrequent specimens of inferior quality offered for sale in the markets of China to-day, date from a period prior to 1550.

It may, perhaps, seem to the reader that over much space is here devoted to the discussion of *céladon* alone. He must remember, however, that great misconceptions have hitherto been entertained by Western *virtuosi* as to the proclivities of Chinese amateurs in ancient times and the direction taken by the genius of early Chinese keramists. It is essential to clear away these errors if the student desires to form any just estimate of the progress of the keramic art. Alone among European authors, Mr. A. W. Franks, of the British Museum, with his wonted judgment, discerned something of the truth when he wrote in the preface to his well known Catalogue: — "Among the simple colours (of Chinese ware) the first place must be assigned to the bluish or sea-green tint, termed by the French *céladon*. It is probably of considerable antiquity, and it is remarkable that one of the earliest specimens of porcelain that can be referred to as having been brought to England before the Reformation, *viz.*, the cup of Archbishop Warham, at New College, Oxford, is of this kind. By Persians and Turks it is termed *martabani*, and it is much valued by them as a detecter of poisonous food. Specimens of this porcelain were sent to Lorenzo de Medici in 1487 by the Sultan of Egypt. It owes its preservation, no doubt, to its great thickness." Probably the best examples of the ware to be found in Europe are those in the Kremlin at Moscow, where they were placed by the Empress Catherine.

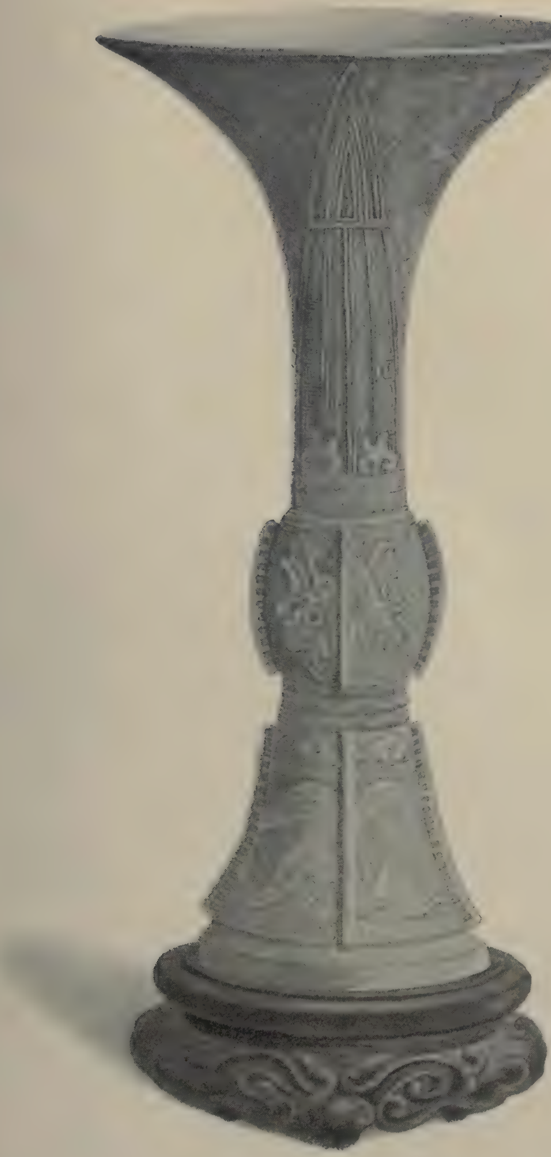
Apart, too, from the historical aspect of the question, Chinese *céladon* is interesting for its own sake. Nothing but the evidence of actual observation could convey an idea of the enthusiastic admiration lavished upon this ware by both Chinese and Japanese amateurs. An estimate of its value, however, can be formed from the fact that for single pieces prices have been given far in excess of any European precedent. Even now the choicest specimens are so highly prized in China and Japan that very few find their way westward, more especially as the merits of the ware are by no means calculated to strike an uneducated eye. Like everything possessing real excellence, it improves upon acquaintance, and the collector can be very certain that, long after he has grown weary of elaborately decorated and brilliantly enamelled pieces, he will experience an ever-growing appreciation of the refined *céladon*, with its glaze of velvet-like lustre and its delicate green or bluish-green colour, which has baffled the skill of all Western workmen and can no longer be produced by the Chinese themselves.

In order to complete this important branch of the subject, it will be advisable at once to carry the history of *céladon* down to modern times. In addition to the *Lung-chuan-yao* manufactured at Ch'u-chou-fu, in Chêkiang, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, and the imitations of *Ko-yao* and *Kuan-yao* made by Hu-kung and Ngeu about the close of that century and the beginning of the next, *céladons* were also produced during the *Ming* dynasty at the Imperial Keramic Factory of Ching-tê-chên, in the province of Kiang-si. This factory's early history will presently be given. Here it is enough to say that, under the *Ming* emperors, its experts had become incomparably the most renowned in the Middle Kingdom. They produced many varieties of ware showing the highest technical skill and artistic excellence, and among these *céladons* were undoubtedly numbered. It is recorded that, in the year 1430, some twenty-five kilns, established at the beginning of the dynasty (1368) for the manufacture of large fish-bowls ornamented with dragons, were converted into *céladon* (*Ching-yao*) kilns, and that the ware produced at them, being intended for the use of the Court, was termed *Kuan-yao*. That these *céladon*s, in name identical with, and in appearance closely resembling, the original *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, may often have been mistaken for the latter by connoisseurs of later times, is easily conceivable. They were, at any rate, beautiful examples of their class, and there can be no doubt that some of the most prized specimens of *céladon* now extant came from the hands of the Ching-tê-chên experts. How then are these Ching-tê-chên pieces to be distinguished from similar wares of earlier date and different place of manufacture?

In order to complete this important branch of the subject, it will be advisable at once to carry the history of *céladon* down to modern times. In addition to the *Lung-ch'üan-yao* manufactured at Ch'u-chou-fu, in Chekiang, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, and the imitations of *Ko-yao* and *Kuan-yao* made by Hu-lung and Ngeo about the close of that century and the beginning of the next, *céladons* were also produced during the *Ming* dynasty at the Imperial Keramic Factory of Ching-tê-chên, in the province of Kiang-si. This factory's early history will presently be given. Here it is enough to say that, under the *Ming* emperors, its experts had become incomparably the most renowned in the Middle Kingdom. They produced many varieties of ware showing the highest technical skill and artistic excellence, and among these *céladons* were undoubtedly numbered. It is recorded that, in the year [illegible], some twenty-five kilns, [illegible] dynasty ([illegible]) for the manufacture of large fish-bowls ornamented with dragons, were converted into *céladon* (*Ch'ing-yao*) kilns, and that the ware produced at them, being intended for the use of the Court, was termed *Kuan-yao*. That these *céladons*, in name identical with, and in appearance closely resembling, the original *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, may often have been mistaken for the latter by connoisseurs of later times, is easily conceivable. They were, at any rate, beautiful examples of their class, and there can be no doubt that some of the most prized specimens of *céladon* now extant came from the hands of the Ching-tê-chên experts. How then are these Ching-tê-chên pieces to be distinguished from similar wares of earlier date and different place of manufacture?

VASE (COPIED FROM ANCIENT BRONZE OF JU-YAO CÉLADON).

Sung dynasty. (Collection of General Huang, who is said to have paid 150,000 cash for it. Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 6⅜ inches. (See page 36.)



Dr. Hirth, who has made a special study of the subject of *céladon*, gives information, already quoted, the gist of which is that, while the *céladons* of the *Ming* and earlier eras manufactured at the Lung-chuan factories, had red, or reddish-brown *pâte*, the *Ming céladons* of Ching-tê-chên had white *pâte*. The rule is rough but, on the whole, trustworthy. It must not be too rigidly applied, however. For although a reddish tinge of greater or less intensity is essentially characteristic of the *Lung-chuan-yao* (including the *Ko-yao*), and perhaps of the *Ju-yao*, the *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty is not necessarily thus distinguished.

During an interval of about thirty years preceding, and as many following, the fall of the *Ming* dynasty (1644), the keramic art in China lapsed into comparative neglect. But at an early period of the reign of *Kang-hsi* (1662–1722), during the present, or *Tsing* dynasty, an energetic revival took place, and fine *céladons* began once more to appear among the products of the Ching-tê-chên factory. Later on, during the reigns of *Yung-ching* (1723–1735) and *Chien-lung* (1736–1795), still greater attention was given to this class of ware. Two celebrated experts raised the keramic art to its highest point of excellence. They were Nien Hsi-yao, called also Nien-kung, who occupied the post of superintendent at the Ching-tê-chên factories under the emperor *Yung-ching*, and Tang Ying, who was associated with Nien from 1727 and succeeded him in 1736. The wares made at Ching-tê-chên under the direction of these masters are commonly known as *Nien-yao* and *T'ang-yao*. Among them many beautiful specimens of *céladon* are found. Sometimes an attempt was made to imitate old ware of the same type by artificially colouring the lower rim of the *pâte.* But in the majority of cases the potters frankly depended on the resources of their own skill and were fully justified by the result. For these *Nien-yao* and *T'ang-yao céladons* undoubtedly rank high among wares of the Middle Kingdom. They differ from their prototypes primarily in the nature of their *pâte*, which is true porcelain, fine, white, less dense and on the whole better manipulated than the *Lung-chuan-yao* biscuit. Their glaze, too, is thinner and less lustrous, lacking the wonderful depth and solid softness of the early *céladons.* In respect of colour, the comparison is difficult. The emerald tint of precious jade is seldom found, or the delicately fresh colour of young onion sprouts, or the indescribable *nuance* of bluish green that constituted connoisseurs' delight in preceding centuries. But, on the other hand, there is a wonderful gradation of tints from green so pale as to be almost grey to grass colour and azure. These restful and æsthetic monochromes deserve even more notice than they have received. In many of them the potter, not relying wholly on beauty of colour, heightened the decorative effect by adding elaborate arabesques and scroll patterns, incised or in relief; which designs, being executed with admirable skill, invest the *Nien-yao* and *T'ang-yao céladons* with great attractions for Western collectors, especially since the shapes are often fine and the dimensions of the pieces noble. Notably charming is a variety in which the decoration is made to appear like a tracery of white lace lying under the delicate green glaze. Good examples of these comparatively modern *céladons* are to be found in European and American collections, whereas the genuine old types are exceedingly rare. Very little knowledge is required to distinguish the two, for the thinner glaze and finer *pâte* of the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* pieces, constituting in themselves easily recognised indications, are often supplemented by year-marks, which are never found on *Lung-chuan-yao*, *Ju-yao*, *Ko-yao*, or *Kuan-yao*.

To conclude this part of the subject and as an interesting confirmation of the deductions recorded above as to the nature of *Sung* wares, it will be well to quote, from a book called the "Annals of Fu-liang," the following account of "Imitations of ancient wares, manufactured at Ching-tê-chên":—

> Ware with iron-coloured *pâte* of the *Ta-kuan* era (1107–1111). Of this there were three kinds; namely *céladon* of dark and light colour, and moon-white. These three species of glaze had the same tint and lustre as the glaze of the vases manufactured for imperial use in the *Ching-te* period (1004–1007).
>
> Ware with copper-coloured *pâte* and glaze imitating that of the *Ju-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, without crackle. This and the preceding ware are of the same colour and brilliancy as the toilette basins of the *Sung* dynasty.
>
> Ware with iron-coloured *pâte* and the glaze of the *Ko-ki*, or vases of the elder Chang. Of this there are two varieties; rice-coloured glaze and pale *céladon*. Each is of the same colour and lustre as the ancient *Sung* ware manufactured for imperial use in the *Ching-te* era (1004–1007).
>
> Ware with copper-coloured *pâte*, glaze of the *Ju-yao*, and crackle of the fish-roe variety. With regard to the tint and lustre of the glaze, the same observation applies as in the preceding cases. Ware with the whitish, or meal-coloured, glaze of the *Fun-ting-yao* (the choicest variety of the *Ting-yao*) of the *Sung* dynasty. Ware with the glaze of the *Chün-yao*. Imitations of the five varieties of *Chün-yao* glaze manufactured for imperial use during the *Sung* dynasty come under this head. These varieties are:—violet, or

sapphire-coloured glaze; red glaze, of the colour of the Japanese pear-blossom; aubergine glaze; green, or plum-coloured, glaze; and horses' lung glaze.

Farther on, in the same catalogue, it is stated that, while excavating at a place called Shang-hu, about five miles (English) from Ching-tê-chên, the remains of an old pottery of the *Sung* dynasty were found. Pieces of the ware manufactured there were picked up. Their glazes were of two colours, light green (*céladon*) and rice-white, or bluish white.

Chapter V

SUNG AND YUAN WARES (*Continued*).

THE reader must not suppose that in the preceding pages he possesses an exhaustive catalogue of wares manufactured during the *Sung* era. Many minor kilns were active in addition to those mentioned in these pages; but as their products were invariably imitations of the *Ting-yao*, *Ju-yao*, *Lung-chuan-yao*, or *Chün-yao* types, and as they differed from their originals in inferiority of techique only, to enumerate them here would be at once confusing and uninstructive. It is, nevertheless, probable that some of the specimens which have been preserved as examples of *Sung chefs-d'œuvre* are in reality the outcome of minor factories. By way of illustration mention may be made of a kiln at Su-chou, in the province of Nanwhei, where it is recorded that large quantities of imitation *Ting-yao* were produced under the *Sung* dynasty. When the true products of *Ting-chou* became rare, this *Su-chou-yao* was greedily purchased by dealers who sold it as genuine *Ting-yao*. A neighbouring factory at Sz'-chou devoted itself to similar work, and its outcome fell into the hands of persons who valued cheapness as much as quality. Thus there doubtless still exist specimens honestly dating from the *Sung* era, but not to be regarded as truly representative examples of the wares after which they are named.

The record arrives now at the keramic metropolis of China, Ching-tê-chên. Here during the past eight centuries have stood the Imperial Factories, and here have been produced the vast majority of the works upon which the fame of Chinese potters rests. Ching-tê-chên is situated on the banks of the Chang-kiang, a branch of the great Yangtze-kiang, in the province of Kiang-si. Its potteries were established in the sixth century under the *Chin* dynasty (557–588). The place was then known as Chang-nan-chin (town on the southern bank of the Chang), but in the *Ching-tê* era (1004–1007) of the *Sung* dynasty its name was changed to Ching-tê-chên (town of the *Ching-tê* era). This change was in commemoration of the establishment of a special factory for the production of pieces to be used by the Court. Under each succeeding dynasty, the *Yuan* Mongols, the native *Ming*, and the Tartar *Tsing*, Ching-tê-chên continued to be the great centre of the potter's art. Under the *Yuan* emperors the inspector of the factories was no less a personage than the Governor of Kiang-si, and in 1369 the *Ming* sovereign appointed a special magistrate to act as overseer. M. d'Entrecolles, in his "*Lettres édifiantes*," gives the following interesting account of the place as it was in his time (1625):—

> Ching-tê-chên wants only walls to merit the name of city and be comparable with the vastest and most populous towns in China. These places named *Chên*, of which but few exist, but which are easy of access and have a large trade, are generally without walls, perhaps in order that they may extend and grow as much as they please; perhaps be-

cause their facilities for the import and export of goods are better when no enclosure exists. There are 18,000 families at Ching-tê-chên. Some are large merchants whose dwellings occupy a vast space and contain a prodigious multitude of workmen. It is commonly said that the place has a million souls in it. For the rest, the town is at least a league in length, on the banks of a fine river. It is not merely a heap of houses, as might be supposed. The streets are as straight as a line. They intersect and cross each other at fixed distances. The whole space is occupied by them, and the houses are, if anything, too close together; the streets too narrow. Passing through them, one imagines oneself in the midst of a fair. On all sides are heard the cries of porters making their way along. The expense of living is much more considerable than at Ju-chou, for everything that is needed has to be imported, even to the wood for the kilns. Yet, despite the high cost of living, Ching-tê-chên is the asylum of a number of poor families who have not the means of subsisting in the neighbouring villages. Young people and men of the poorest physique find employment. Not even the blind and the deformed fail to make a living by grinding the colours. "In ancient times," says the history of Fu-liang, "Ching-tê-chên counted only three hundred porcelain kilns." At present it has fully three thousand. No wonder that conflagrations are often seen there, for which reason several temples have been erected to the God of Fire. The worship and the honours paid to this deity do not diminish the number of calamities. A short time ago, eight hundred houses were reduced to ashes. They will be quickly rebuilt, if one may judge by the multitude of carpenters and masons employed in the quarter. The profits made by letting shops render the Chinese very active in repairing losses of this kind. Ching-tê-chên is situated in a vast plain surrounded by high mountains. The mountain on the east, forming the city's background, takes the shape of a semi-circle on the outer side. From these hills issue two rivers which join. One of them is small, but the other is very large and forms a fine port, nearly a league long, in a vast basin where the stream loses much of its rapidity. Sometimes, in this wide area of water, one sees as many as two or three rows of ships ranged one behind the other. Such is the spectacle presented when one emerges from one of the passes into the port. Clouds of flame and smoke, rising in different places, direct attention to the width, the depth, and the shape of the city. At night, one might imagine oneself looking at a vast city all on fire, or an immense furnace with numerous outlets. Perhaps this environment of mountains forms a situation suitable for the porcelain industry. It is astonishing that a place so populous, where such wealth exists, where an infinity of junks arrive daily, and where there are no enclosing walls, should be governed by a solitary mandarin without the least failure of good order. In truth, Ching-tê-chên is only a league from the district of Fu-liang and eighteen leagues from Ju-chou, but it must be confessed that the police system is admirable there. Each street has a head-man appointed. Each head-man has ten subalterns, each of whom is responsible for ten houses. Their duty is to preserve good order, repair at once to the scene of any disturbance, quell it and give information of it to the mandarin, under pain of the bastinado, which is liberally used. Often the head-man himself vainly gives notice of a trouble and declares that he has taken every step to calm it. There is always a disposition to lay the blame on his shoulders and he escapes a beating with difficulty. Each street has barricades which are closed at night, and must not be opened without certain signals. Moreover, the Mandarin of the district goes his rounds frequently, and so do the mandarins of Fu-liang, from time to time. Further, strangers are not permitted to sleep at Ching-tê-chên. They must either pass the night in the ships, or lodge with some acquaintance who is responsible for their good behaviour. The police preserve perfect order and establish complete security in a place rich enough to excite the cupidity of an infinity of thieves.

As to the nature of the work done at this great industrial centre during the first cycle of its existence, nothing is known. It is recorded that an emperor of the *Sui* dynasty (583 A.D.) ordered the potters of the district to furnish keramic wares to the Court by way of impost. Not till the beginning of the seventh century, however, is any clue obtained as to the wares themselves. The *Tao-yao* and the *Ho-yao* — described in a previous chapter — then made their appearance and were compared to white jade. The manufactures of the place received no further notice for nearly four hundred years, when, in the period *Ching-tê* (1004–1007), the *Sung* emperor Chin-tsong conferred on the workers in a special factory the title of "Keramists to the Court." When it is remembered that under the *Sung* rulers wares of such note as the *Ting-yao*, the *Kuan-yao*, the *Ju-yao*, and the *Chün-yao*, were produced, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the potters of Ching-tê-chên must have developed a high degree of skill to be honoured by such a distinction. The *Tao-lu*, though nominally a history of Ching-tê-chên keramics, does not describe the wares manufactured there at this epoch, further than to say that their *pâte* was white and comparatively thin, that their surface was polished and lustrous, and that they were distinguished alike by the *éclat* of their glaze, the fineness of their biscuit, and the elegance of their shape. Imitations of them are said to have found ready purchasers throughout the empire. That alone would suffice to show that the wares did not differ from their contemporaries in excellence of technique. They were, in fact, *céladons*, and white, or rice-white, pieces. The emperor ordered that specimens intended for imperial use should be marked *Ching-tê nien chi*, which signifies "made (*chi*) in the *Ching-tê* year." In what manner this mark was originally made, whether by means of a seal or by a graving tool, tradition does not say. It was the first instance of using marks in this manner, and with three exceptions — the *Chün-yao*, the *Kwang-yao* (ware of Canton), and the *boccaro* of Yi-hsing — the practice does not seem to have been extended to the manufactures of other kilns. At Ching-tê-chên, however, it continued uninterruptedly until the seventeenth century.

It thus appears that at Ching-tê-chên also *céladons* of the finest quality and wares of the *Ting-yao* type were potted during the *Sung* era. In respect of these wares the test of red or iron-brown *pâte* does not apply, as it does in the case of the *Lung-chuan-yao* and *Ju-yao*.

The student comes now to the *Yuan* dynasty of Mongols. This period of less than a century (1279–1367) was not favourable to the development of art industry. No marked progress took place in keramics. The Mongol sovereigns did not greatly patronise the industry. During the period when Kublai Khan held his Court at Cambaluc, an active demand certainly sprang up for the products of factories celebrated under the previous dynasty. To imitate such pieces successfully was probably the highest aim of most of the skilled potters. One among these, an expert called Pong Chun-pao, is mentioned in the "History of Ching-tê-chên Wares." He had his kiln at Hoshu, in the province of Nanwhei, and there he manufactured pieces which, from their close resemblance to the *Ting-yao* of the preceding dynasty, were commonly called *Shin-tin-ki*, or "new *Ting* ware," but sometimes also *Ho-yao*, from the place of their manufacture, and sometimes

Pong-yao, after the name of their maker. In the neighbourhood of Ching-tê-chên also, at Hu-tien-shi, there was a factory the productions of which are specially mentioned under the name of *Hu-tien-yao*. Specimens of this ware are to be found occasionally to-day. They owe their preservation to their durability rather than to their beauty. The *pâte* is thick and dense, without any of the delicacy of porcelain, and the glaze is muddy yellow, not lacking, however, in lustre or uniformity. The surface of these pieces is generally relieved by deeply incised designs of somewhat archaic character, figure subjects being most common. Some examples are preserved in Japanese collections, where they are known as *Ningyo-de* (figure-subject variety), in allusion to the nature of the incised designs.

Without dwelling further upon minor products of the *Yuan* period, which were simply imitations of antecedent types, attention may be at once directed to the ware regarded as so essentially representative of the dynasty by Chinese connoisseurs of the present day that they call it *Yuan-tsü*, or "*Yuan* porcelain." It is not, however, porcelain, but heavy stone-ware, having dense, fine *pâte*, gray or reddish gray, and wholly opaque. The beauty of the ware resides entirely in the glaze, which deserves admiration. The body colour is that peculiar delicate blue, aptly compared to moon-light, which has already been spoken of in connection with the *Chün-yao* of the *Sung* period, and in it are seen floating splashes or clouds of blood red. Sometimes the *clair-de-lune* surface is speckled with red, after the fashion of the *Chun-yao*, of which, indeed, the *Yuan-tsü* is evidently an off-shoot and for which some specimens of it may readily be mistaken. The glaze is unusually thick and lustrous, carrying with it an idea of wonderful depth and richness. Crackle is sometimes present, but many of the finest pieces are without this addition, The ware being very solid and durable, examples are not infrequent. They are chiefly bowls and small cups, the latter of the choicest description and very highly valued by Chinese connoisseurs. Imitations made in the *Ming* and *Tsin* dynasties are, however, tolerably common and not easy to distinguish from genuine pieces. The chief differences are that the glaze of the former is comparatively thin, the *pâte* finer, and the bottom of the specimen more neatly finished. The connoisseur will of course understand that when later experts of Ching-tê-chên, possessing all the materials and more than the ability of their predecessors, undertook to imitate the latter's pieces, they may have excelled, but were not likely to fall short of, their originals. It is not by any means to be supposed that the richly glazed and delicately coloured specimens of so-called "Yuan-tsü" offered for sale by Chinese dealers are all genuine examples of the *Yuan* ware. A majority of them are imitations, generally more beautiful than the real *Yuan-tsü* itself.

Although under the *Yuan*, as well as under the *Sung*, dynasty the Chin-tê-chên factories continued to be specially distinguished by imperial patronage, they did not entirely monopolise the duty of supplying the palace. Pieces of exceptional excellence appear to have been either purchased at the ordinary workshops or presented by manufacturers in lieu of taxes. According to the author of the *Tao-lo*, the nature of the service required of the official factories was so onerous that only private kilns enjoyed prosperity.

Unfortunately, of such kilns few records have been preserved. Whatever their achievements, Ching-tê-chên eclipsed them sufficiently to become alone traditional. A book quoted in the *Tao-lu* says: — "The vases of Ching-tê-chên, made of plastic clay, are of perfect whiteness and without faults." And again:— "The white and the *céladon* vases used in the provinces of Chêkiang, of Hupeh, of Szechuen, and of Kwangtung, come from the Ching-tê-chên factories." Pieces destined for the Court were distinguished as *Shu-fu-yao*, or "ware for the use of the palace." They were sometimes marked *Shu-fu*. The author of the *Tao-lu* speaks of these wares as the product of private workshops, but his evident meaning is that their manufacture was not confined to Government kilns. The latter were not constantly employed in supplying the wants of the palace. Often a money tax was levied from them in lieu of keramic services, and at such times they naturally devoted themselves to working for the ordinary market. Thence, doubtless, arose the habit of distinguishing between wares intended for sale and those for imperial use. The chief variety of this *Shu-fu-yao* was white. It was in fact an imitation of the celebrated *Ting-yao* of the preceding dynasty. H'siang, in his "Illustrated Catalogue," shows a specimen of the ware. He describes it as a small bottle-shaped vase, decorated with dragons in the midst of clouds and having lion's-head handles, all faintly engraved in the paste, under a white glaze. He then goes on to say: — "The porcelain of our own (*Ming*) dynasty, of the reigns of *Yung-lo* and *Hsuan-te*, decorated with patterns engraved under a white glaze, was made after the imperial porcelain. The *Shu-fu* porcelain itself was copied from the Ting-chou porcelain of the Northern *Sung* dynasty, and this bottle, in its paste and form, in the colour of the glaze, and in the engraved design, is altogether like a *Ting* piece." The *Tao-lu* also gives the following particulars about the *Yuan* dynasty *Shu-fu-yao:* — "So soon as an order reached the factory, steps were immediately taken to execute it. The clay used had to be fine, white, and plastic. It was preferred that these vases should have little thickness. The majority of them had a small base and moulded flowers. Some also were ornamented with gold and had flowers in relief (of glazing material). The vases with large bases were uniform and brilliant. In the interior of these vases the words *Shu-fu* were marked. Imitations of them were made by private potters, but inasmuch as when there was question of vases destined to be presented to the emperor, only ten were chosen out of every hundred, it will be seen that humble private manufacturers could not attain the necessary perfection."

It will further be remembered that during this dynasty Lung-chuan *céladons* continued to be manufactured at Liu-tien. Summing up the keramic products of the time, they are Lung-chuan and Ching-tê-chên *céladons* (the latter differing from the former in quality of *pâte* and delicacy of colour); white soft-paste ware of Ching-tê-chên, and finally the remarkable *Yuan-tsü* with its *clair-de-lune* body-glaze and blood-red marking. Under the same dynasty porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze was also manufactured, but it will be more convenient to speak of this later on, as well as of another product, then in its elementary stage, porcelain or stone-ware with enamel decoration over the glaze.

The keramic annals of the *Yuan* dynasty may be concluded by noting that opportunities for the westward export of the products of Chinese kilns continued much as before "The Mongol rulers" (according to Dr. Hirth's "Ancient Chinese Porcelain") were masters of Bagdad as well as of Peking, and constant intercourse took place through Central Asia between the east and west of that gigantic empire. The journeys of Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta bear witness to the continuance of the sea trade between the coast of China and Arab provinces. Batuta states distinctly, as regards porcelain, that 'it is exported to India and elsewhere, passing from country to country till it reaches us in Morocco.' The Chinese themselves, during the Mongol period, were pervaded by a desire to extend their power by maritime warfare, and whatever may have been the success of Kublai Khan's expeditions against Japan, Java, and other southern islands, they show that maritime enterprise had not declined among his subjects on the coast of China." This state of warlike effervescence was not particularly well suited to the circulation of the products of peace, but the fact that Bagdad and Peking were ruled by the same sceptre, is in itself sufficient to indicate that Chinese wares must have found their way westward in considerable quantities.

Chapter VI

PORCELAIN DECORATED UNDER THE GLAZE

THE history of Chinese keramics under the *Sui*, *Tang*, *Sung*, and *Yuan* dynasties — a period of eight centuries (581–1367) — indicates that to produce a single-coloured or white glaze was the potter's first aim. He understood and largely practised the device of ornamenting the surface of a piece with designs incised or in relief, to which the comparative thickness or thinness of the superincumbent glaze imparted an appearance of dark or light colour. But the glaze was everything. On its lustre, solidity, and tone the whole beauty of the specimen depended. To make it perfectly colourless and translucid, a mere agent for preserving and revealing decoration beneath, did not find a place among his methods, and, indeed, was not likely to find a place in the case of most of his *pâtes*. The dense, grey clay of the old *céladons* and their contemporary monochromes could scarcely serve a better purpose than that of carrying a rich, opaque or semi-opaque glaze, brilliant and yet restful. It has been seen that the manufacture of finer *pâtes* was within his competence. The *Ting-yao* proves this. Its tender, fine and pure biscuit indicated a high degree of

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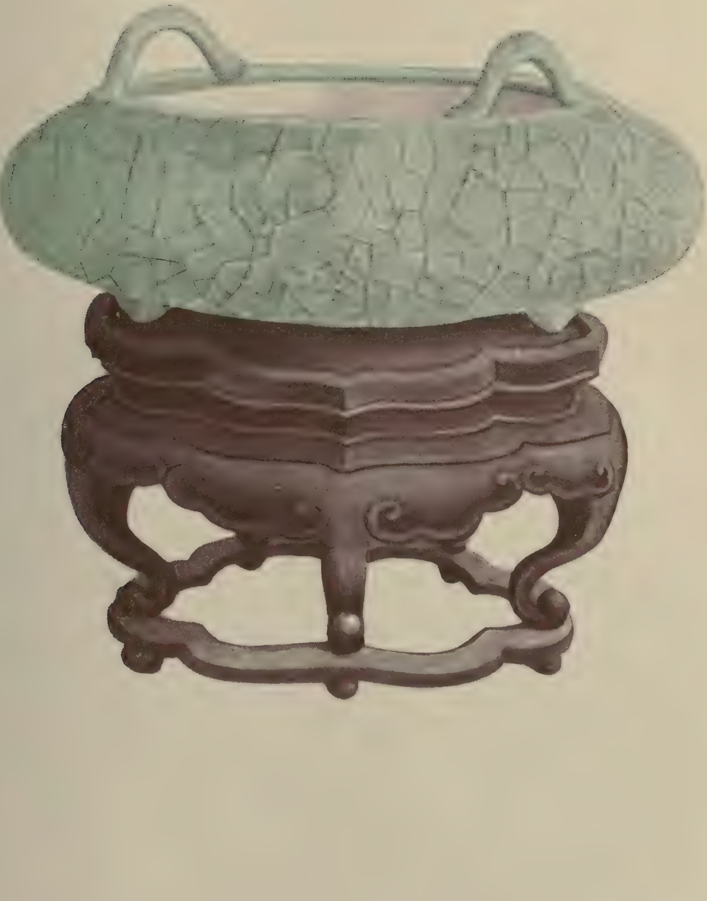
CENSER (COPIED FROM ANCIENT BRONZE) OF *KUAN-YAO.*

Sung dynasty. Pale céladon with starred-in crackle. (Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 1¼ inches.

(See page 39.)



technical skill. But a new decorative impulse was needed to subordinate glaze to decoration. When and how this impulse was imparted it is impossible to say precisely. The meagre evidence available points, however, to the close of the *Sung* era (*circa* 1200) as the probable date of the new departure. Chinese records, so far as they have hitherto been explored, are silent on the subject. H'siang, whose "Illustrated Catalogue" was compiled during the second half of the sixteenth century, describes eighty-two specimens of the wares most valued by connoisseurs at that period. Forty-three of these specimens are pieces manufactured during the *Sung* and *Yuan* dynasties. Among them there is not even one example of decoration with blue under the glaze. The first specimen of this sort mentioned by H'siang — a virtuoso whose reputation as a connoisseur obtained for him complimentary notice in the great Bibliographical Cyclopedia of *Chien-lung* (1736–1795) — belongs to the reign of the *Ming* Emperor *Hsuan-tê* (1426–1435). Even though it stood alone, such an item of evidence would suffice to show that, if porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze was manufactured before the *Ming* dynasty (1368), it did not succeed in establishing a title to be ranked among *objets d'art*. And when to the negative information afforded by H'siang's Catalogue is added the fact that the blue-and-white of the *Sung* and *Yuan* dynasties is absolutely ignored by other records, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that this branch of the art was still in a tentative and elementary condition.

Here the Japanese come to the student's aid. These enigmatical people, side by side with keen appreciation of the graceful and the beautiful, developed, under the influence of the *Cha no Yu* cult, an antiquarian taste of the most severe description. The genuine *Chajin* aspired to simplicity before everything. The closer he could get to nature, the more faithfully was he obeying the tenets of his philosophy. Could he have dispensed altogether with manufactured utensils without outraging refinement, he would doubtless have made the attempt. His austerity did not, however, carry him quite so far. He was content to use the closest procurable representatives of nascent art, and in these his sympathetic eye detected excellences which were doubtless present, to some extent, since the efforts of all successful pioneers show traces of original genius. To this propensity is due the preservation of many specimens which would never have survived for their own sakes. Among them are examples of blue-and-white ware dating from the *Sung* period. The epoch is fixed, not alone by tradition, but also by inscriptions which the specimens carry. As a general rule year-marks are quite untrustworthy for determining the date of a keramic specimen. What they do show, however, in the case of imitators so faithful as the Chinese, is that ware of a certain description was manufactured at a certain epoch. A Chinese potter would scarcely resort to the manifest fraud of producing an intrinsically worthless specimen of blue-and-white merely for the sake of marking it with the date of a period when nothing of the kind had existed. Such deceptions might have been practised at the factories of *Chien-lung*, or even of *Kang-hsi*, to supply the demand of Japanese collectors. But some of the specimens here referred to are said to have come to Japan as long ago as the thirteenth century, or fully two hundred years before the dilettanteism from which they subsequently derived their value had begun to be largely developed. Thus, from every point of view, there is reason to believe that they are genuine representatives of what the *Sung* and *Yuan* potters were able to accomplish in the way of decorating with blue under the glaze. It was not a notable accomplishment, either technically or artistically. The earlier pieces are known in Japan as *Tai-so-yaki*, "*Tai-so*" being the Japanese method of pronouncing the ideographs "*Ta-Sung*" (the great *Sung* dynasty). They are stone-ware; the *pâte* hard, fine, and well manipulated, but generally too thick and solid to suggest any great skill of manufacture. The designs are bold, but roughly executed, and the blue is evidently of very inferior quality, its tone being muddy and unsatisfactory. Working with such a pigment, the keramists of those early days had little to encourage elaborate or artistic effort. They seem also to have been more or less inexperienced or careless in the management of white, translucid glazes; for the surface of their pieces, especially at salient points, is often disfigured by defects doubtless due originally to blisters in the glaze. Blemishes of this peculiar nature are regarded as marks of authenticity by the Japanese, who call them *muhsi-kui*, or "insect erosions;" a term that aptly describes their appearance. Not until the latter days of the *Yuan* dynasty — *i.e.* the beginning of the fourteenth century — does this ware begin to show signs of skilled manufacture. The *pâte* then ceases to be stone-ware and becomes porcelain; the glaze is whiter and more even; and the blue has a much purer, though still inferior, tone. To this period may probably be assigned the first manufacture of hard-paste translucid porcelain in China. It is impossible, of course, to speak with absolute certainty on such a point. Were there question of a new discovery, such as that made by John Schnorr at Ane, or by Madame Darnet at St. Yrieix, it might be easy to be more explicit. But the story deals, rather, with what seems to have been a gradual transition. The records of Ching-tê-chên show very plainly that, from the time when the potter's industry first began to flourish there (circ. 580 A.D.), *kaolin*, or porcelain earth, was used at the factories. Indeed it was the presence of feldspathic rock that lent the locality its importance as a keramic centre. In order to manufacture fine porcelain, however, it was necessary to mix other clays with this petrosilex, and the nature of the ware produced would have varied, of course, with the proportions in which the ingredients were combined. So long as thick lustrous glazes constituted the chief decoration of a piece, a solid *pâte* was probably found to possess special advantage. But when colourless, translucid glaze came to be required, as in the case of blue-and-white ware, the quality of the body of a vase naturally underwent some change. The progress of the two processes — decoration with blue under the glaze and the manufacture of a true hard-paste porcelain biscuit — may therefore be said to have occurred simultaneously during the same epoch — the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries — and to have attained appreciable development, though by no means yet reaching a point of culmination, at the close of the *Yuan* dynasty.

Among the keramic products of China, none, perhaps, has greater interest or importance for foreign collectors than "blue-and-white." It deserves specially careful notice. Summing up what has already been stated, the result is that, as an artistic product, the manufacture commenced under the *Ming* dynasty (1368-1644). The earliest examples, dating from the *Sung* and *Yuan* eras, are inferior in respect of *pâte* and colour alike. Disfigured by discontinuities or blisters in the glaze, clumsily finished, rudely painted, the blue of impure tone without either brilliancy or depth, and the decorative designs formal if not archaic — the painter's range of conception not extending beyond scroll patterns, clumsy figure-subjects, and diapers — the ware was evidently destined for common purposes of household life. As an object of art it could not possibly rank with the *Ting-yao*, the *Kuan-yao*, the *Chün-yao*, the *Yuan-tsü*, or any of their celebrated contemporaries. The potter, in short, saw no inducement to expend strength upon a manufacture that gave so little promise. What chiefly deterred him is said by some authorities to have been the want of a good pigment. They suppose that the cobalt used by the first manufacturers of blue-and-white was of native origin, and that, though it was not incapable of producing a rich colour, the difficulty of refining it exceeded the skill of the time. According to this theory, the arrival of a purer mineral from abroad, in the form of tribute, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, first directed really expert attention to decoration with blue under the glaze. But the "Annals of the *Sung* Dynasty," quoted by Dr. Bushell, speak of the "Arabs bringing to China, in the tenth century, among other presents for the emperor, pieces of cobalt blue (*Wu-ming-yi*), which had long before this time been employed in Western Asia in the decoration of pottery." There is no apparent reason to suppose that the nature of this "Mohammedan blue" (*Hui-ching*), as it was called, had undergone any change between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries. A more reasonable hypothesis is that improved methods of treating it were among the scientific and technical developments for which the *Ming* epoch was remarkable. Dr. Bushell has the following note on the subject:—

> The blue colour used for painting under the glaze was originally brought from one of the Mohammedan countries on the West of China as tribute, according to the Official Description of the Province of Kiangsi. In the reign of Hsuan-tê (1426–1435) it was called *Su-ni-po* blue, and it is recorded that the supply of it faded before the reign of Chêng-hua (1465–1487). In other books of the period it is called *Su-ma-li*, or *Su-ma-ni*, blue. In the reign of Chia-ching (1522–1567) Mohammedan blue was again obtained by a eunuch governing the province of Yünnan, and the blue-and-white of this reign is still celebrated for its brilliant colour. The supply again ran short towards the end of this reign, and an inferior blue was produced from the incineration of *Wu-ming-yi*, a cobaltiferous ore of manganese found in different parts of China. The Mohammedan blue was broken up with the hammer, and the pieces which showed on fracture vermilion spots were picked out as the first-class blue, those with silver stars being used for the medium colour, and from each sixteen ounces of these pieces three ounces remained after the incineration in a closed vessel. The remaining fragments were thrown into water, impurities drawn off by magnetic iron ore, and the residue yielded another thirtieth part by weight of the true blue. If this blue were employed alone the colour was apt to spread, and it was necessary to add a proportion of native blue, not too much or the colour would be dull and heavy. The "first-class blue" was a mixture of ten parts of the

former with one of the latter; the average blue of about equal parts, and this came out of the kiln with each stroke of the brush clearly defined. The first-class blue mixed with much water and spread over the surface in mass, gave a pure and transparently bright tint.

The *Tao-lu* states that ten ounces of the imported blue in its unrefined state cost three dollars. Thus the cost after refinement was more than a dollar and a half per ounce. A special class of experts devoted themselves to judging its quality. To the choicest grade they gave the fanciful epithet "blue of the head of Buddha." Nothing is known as to the exact composition of this Mohammedan blue. The native Chinese mineral, with which the potters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced beautiful results, has been analysed by M. Salvétat. His result is as follows: —

Silica	37.46	Lime	0.60
Oxide of Copper . .	0.44	Magnesia . . .	Trace
Alumina	4.75	Arsenious Acid .	Trace
Oxide of Cobalt . .	5.50	Oxide of Nickel, Sulphur, &c. . . .	Traces
Oxide of Manganese	27.50		
Oxide of Iron . .	1.65	Moisture	20.00

With the accession of the *Ming* dynasty (1368), the golden period of Chinese keramics may be said to have commenced. The first sovereign of the dynasty was Hung-wu, who reigned from 1368 to 1399. In the second year of his reign a special factory at Ching-tê-chên was appointed to supply the Court. Its products were named *Kuan-yao*, or *Kuan-tsü*. This name — Imperial Ware — was thenceforth applied to several varieties of choice keramic manufactures, which the connoisseur will, of course, be careful to distinguish from the original *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty. At this time, also, the custom of using marks to indicate the epoch of manufacture came into general vogue. It will be remembered that the custom originated three centuries previously, in the reign of the Emperor Chin-tsong. Genuine specimens of ware bearing the *Ching-tê* or other *Sung* marks are, of course, virtually unprocurable. The marks are found, however, on imitations manufactured at Ching-tê-chên by comparatively modern potters. The same is true of *Ming* year-marks. Collectors should hold to the general rule that such marks are untrustworthy. Many forgeries exist for one honest mark. Thus, although various marks will henceforth be mentioned in connection with blue-and-white ware, the reader will understand that they are not quoted as true indications. In blue-and-white porcelain the connoisseur has to look first to the nature and quality of the *pâte;* next to the purity and brilliancy of the blue decoration; thirdly, to the manner in which the design is executed, and fourthly to the texture and colour of the glaze. Thus guided, he can usually form an idea approximating more or less closely to the truth, and is then enabled to decide whether the year-mark may be taken as a final indication. With respect to the four points here enumerated, verbal descriptions cannot be wholly satisfactory. Features permitting such explanation will, however, be carefully noted in their proper place.

The blue-and-white of the *Hung-wu* era (1368–1399) was still an inferior product. It is not mentioned at all in the "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics," unless the jars there spoken of as ornamented with dragons, belong to this category. From insignificant specimens preserved in Japan — none are known to exist in China — it would appear that the *pâte* of the blue-and-white *Hung-yao* was dense and heavy; that the glaze was of medium lustre, permeated by a bluish tinge, and that the colour of the decoration, though superior to that of the *Yuan* and *Sung* wares, altogether lacked the brilliancy and depth of subsequent manufactures. But in truth the student possesses little knowledge about the ware. It was evidently unworthy to be mentioned in written records or remembered in tradition. The year-mark is *Hung-wu-nien-chi.*

The next period calling for attention is that of *Yung-lo* (1403–1425). Remarkable for great progress in the technical processes of porcelain manufacture, it did not apparently contribute much to the art of decoration with blue *sous-couverte.* Premising that very scanty materials exist for forming an opinion, it may be asserted that the blue of the *Yung-lo* epoch is somewhat clearer and more brilliant than that of the preceding reign; that the overlying glaze is particularly lustrous and of velvet-like texture; and that the *pâte* is close-grained, of fine timbre, and lighter than that of *Hung-wu* pieces. The "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics" speaks of *Yung-lo* cups decorated with flowers in blue of a very deep colour, and says that they were refined and artistic. Bowls of *Yung-lo* blue-and-white, with landscapes or figure subjects on one side and a mass of ideographs on the other, are prized by Japanese virtuosi, who call them "*Seki-heki,*" that being the Japanese name of the sonnet generally represented by the ideographs. Remembering the reverence in which writing has always been held by the Chinese, and considering the labour bestowed on the decoration of these bowls as well as the care with which the paste and glaze are manipulated, it seems reasonable to class them among representative specimens of blue-and-white of their period. If this conclusion be correct, the qualities of the ware did not yet entitle it to high rank among keramic productions. The year-mark of the period is *Yung-lo mien-chi*, *i.e.* manufactured in the *Yung-lo* period; but the ideographs are usually written in a more archaic form.

The *Hsuan-tê* era (1426–1436) is in many respects the most remarkable period of the *Ming* dynasty. The blue-and-white porcelain of this date was the first ware of the kind that really deserved to rank among beautiful and artistic productions. In the quality of the porcelain itself a special change is observable. Now for the first time blue decoration was successfully applied to soft-paste porcelain. The *Yung-lo* potters were little, if at all, less skilled than those of the next reign in the manipulation of their materials. But the idea does not appear to have occurred to them that blue decoration *sous couverte* might be applied to ware of the *Ting-yao* type; that is to say, ware having a soft *pâte*. By the term "soft *pâte*" the reader must not understand an artificial porcelain mass like that originally used by the potters of Sèvres. The soft *pâte* of the Chinese keramist was distinguished from hard porcelain biscuit simply in having a much greater admixture of argillaceous matter. It was, in fact, semi-porcelain, made, however, so thin and of such thoroughly refined materials as to be often translucid. As to the composition of the soft *pâte* of the *Sung Ting-*

yao and its successors, tradition says nothing, and no analysis has been made in modern times. But the soft *pâte* of the *Hsuan-tê* blue-and-white ware is said to have been obtained by adding to porcelain-stone clay taken from the bed of the river at Ching-tê-chên. The *Tao-lu*, speaking of the vases manufactured at the imperial kilns during this epoch, says that they were made with "red, plastic clay;" that their "biscuit was like cinnabar," and that "all the materials employed were of the finest quality." M. Salvétat was led by this description to conjecture that the author of the *Tao-lu* referred to fine stone-ware of the *Grès de Flandre* class. Such was not the case, however. The *Hsuan-yao* is the type of a large number of porcelains manufactured continuously by Chinese keramists from 1426 to 1810, and regarded by the connoisseurs of the Middle Kingdom as the choicest and most valuable ware of their kind (blue-and-white). Its distinctive features are great thinness and lightness of *pâte* — though many beautiful specimens lack these special qualities — a peculiar crackled glaze, differing essentially from all other glazes run over blue decoration, and a waxy white ground, the snow-like purity of which contrasts exquisitely with the colour of the decoration. The glaze being perfectly translucid, it is evident that the blue decoration cannot have been applied directly to the reddish brown biscuit. The latter had to be previously covered with some white opaque substance, on the preparation and application of which much of the specimen's beauty depended. Possibly steatite was employed for the purpose. M. d'Entrecolles speaks as follows of this mineral: —

The potters conceived the idea of employing this stone instead of *kaolin*. It is named *Hwah* (soapy) because it is unctuous and in some degree resembles soap. Porcelain made with steatite is rare and much dearer than the other. It has an extremely fine grain, and for purposes of painting it is to ordinary porcelain pretty much what vellum is to paper. Moreover, its lightness appears astonishing to a hand accustomed to other porcelains. It is also much more fragile than common ware, and there is difficulty in obtaining the right temperature in baking it. Some experts do not use steatite for the porcelain mass. They content themselves with making a solution of it into which they plunge the ware when the latter is dry, in order that the body of the piece may become coated with the mineral before receiving the decoration and the glaze. A certain degree of beauty is thus acquired.

The conspicuous fault of a vast majority of blue-and-white porcelains is that the body of the piece has a watery, bluish tint, offering a weak and unsatisfactory contrast to the colour of the decoration. But in the ware now discussed the pure white of the wax-like covering applied to the *pâte* constitutes an inimitable field for the blue decoration, which stands out with dazzling brilliancy and distinctness and is yet charmingly soft. The manufacture of such ware involved much labour. The *pâte* having been prepared with great care and worked down to almost wafer-like thinness, had to be sun-dried until it became tough enough to handle. It was then dipped in a solution of *kaolin* or steatite, and set once more to dry. Either of these drying processes might have been easily accomplished in the kiln. But the Chinese potter did not stove his pieces before applying the decoration *sous couverte* and the glaze. He preferred to take the trouble of drying them for months, sometimes even for a year, until they acquired sufficient consistency to be manipulated. This seemingly superfluous labour was well repaid by the ultimate appearance of the glaze, differing palpably as it did from the comparatively weak, lustreless covering obtained by the easier process of application after preliminary stoving. A second drying was of course necessary after the coating of steatite or *kaolin* had been given. The decorative design was then traced in cobalt, and finally the whole was covered with perfectly colourless, translucid glaze, which, expanding more slowly than the body of the piece under the influence of heat, became covered with a net-work of crackle that imparted an aspect of indescribable softness. From this crackle the ware derives the name *Kai-pien*, or open edges, by which it is known in China. By some connoisseurs it is also called *Wei-tsü*, a term possessing no distinctive significance, as its literal meaning is simply "baked porcelain." It is the "blue-and-white egg-shell" of Western collectors, who, however, apply the same appellation to another and not less remarkable species of ware similarly decorated, namely, hard porcelain as thin as paper, manufactured in the ordinary manner and without crackle.

Among all the blue-and-white wares of the *Ming* epoch, that of the Hsuan-tê reign ranks highest in China. But its superiority to some of the later products of the same dynasty is not marked. The only appreciable difference lies in the quality of the blue, concerning which it is not possible to give any written description other than that it is deep, brilliant, and clear, and that it seems to be actually inlaid in the *pâte*, so intimately are the two associated. Undoubtedly the blue of this era offered a striking contrast to anything that went before. Why such should have been the case it is not easy to determine. Looking at the history of the time, it will perhaps be right to refer the general art progress that took place during Hsuan-tê's reign to the peaceful state of the empire. The two first *Ming* sovereigns were at war throughout nearly the whole of their reigns. Not until the closing year of Yung-lo's life can the authority of the dynasty be said to have been firmly established and the tranquillity of the country assured. The third emperor reigned only a few months and was succeeded by Hsuan-tê, who happily found leisure to devote attention to peaceful pursuits. He received envoys from remote States, as Malacca and Bengal, and since it is known that the mineral used for painting porcelain in blue under the glaze was originally brought as tribute from one of the Mohammedan countries to the west of the Middle Kingdom, there may be truth in the hypothesis advanced by some that the first plentiful supply of it reached Ching-tê-chên at the beginning of Hsuan-tê's reign. What is more probable, however, and less at variance with history, is that the manner of employing this blue for painting designs on porcelain was not fully understood by earlier experts.

Of course the *Kai-pien-yao* was not the only kind of blue-and-white ware manufactured during the *Hsuan-tê* era. On the contrary, judging from the great rarity of surviving specimens, despite the high value set upon them from the moment of their production to the present day, the inference is that but a limited supply of it was turned out. Much commoner and more plentifully manufactured was ordinary hard-paste porcelain decorated in the same manner. This, too, was distinguished by the grand tone of the blue. Being more durable, it ought to have survived in larger quantities than the *Kai-pien-yao*, but the far greater esteem in which the latter was always held doubtless gave it an advantage in this respect. Certain it is that examples of *Hsuan-tê* hard-paste blue-and-white are not less scarce than specimens of *Kai-pien-yao* dating from the same period.

As to the decorative subjects employed at this early era, it is difficult to give a comprehensive description. Floral designs, dragons among clouds, conventional landscapes, grasshoppers, figures, scroll-patterns, and diapers were all in vogue. Speaking generally, it may be asserted that a grave defect of Chinese decoration, whether under or over the glaze, is its mechanical character. Except in the case of very choice pieces, the same subject was the work of several artists. One man traced or painted flowers only; another confined himself to mountains; a third depicted nothing but trees; a fourth made a study of birds alone; a fifth of fishes, and so on. Even in painting human figures, the hands and feet, the faces and the drapery were often undertaken by different decorators. The natural result of this piecemeal method of building up a picture was that the *ensemble* lacked force and originality. Seldom are there found on Chinese porcelain the charming and delicate sketches, often as redolent of life as they are faithful in detail, that impart such beauty and character to the master-pieces of Japanese keramists. Here again an important distinction is established between hard-paste and soft-paste blue-and-white.

For while the former, in the vast majority of cases, unless its decoration be of purely conventional or geometrical type, is disfigured by an aspect of patchwork crudeness, the designs on the latter are invariably the work of one hand, and leave little to be desired in respect of conception or execution. Every stroke is firm and distinct, and not infrequently the motive is treated with boldness and fidelity that recall the genius of the Japanese keramist. There are exceptions of course, especially when the painter attempts to depict some mythical animal, as the Dog of Fo or a bushy-tailed tortoise. But the rule, as between the two classes of porcelain, may be accepted in the sense herein indicated. It also holds, though to a less marked extent, with regard to the second class of "egg-shell" blue-and-white porcelain. This is nothing more than hard-paste porcelain of exceeding thinness. Often it is scarcely thicker than a sheet of paper, and so translucid that there is difficulty in conceiving the existence of any *pâte* at all between the inner and outer coats of glaze. To obtain a pure, brilliant tone of blue in the decoration of such ware is quite beyond the capacity of any but the most skilled expert. The Chinaman, however, succeeded perfectly. Moreover, he was able to stove his cups and bowls on their inferior (and therefore narrow) rims without suffering them to shrivel or warp under the influence of the high temperature necessary to develop the colour of the blue — a feat demanding wonderfully skilled manipulation. These pieces, generally insignificant as to dimensions — tiny cups, rice-bowls, and so forth — are always decorated with minute care. In this respect they rank almost on an equal plane with the beautiful *Kai-pien-yao*, though

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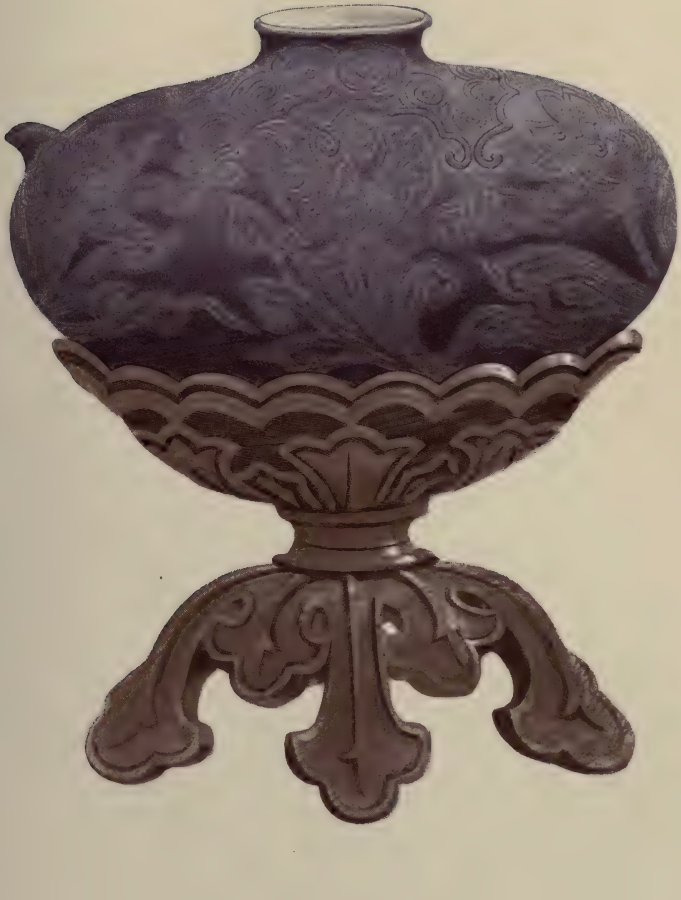
WINE-POT OF *CHÜN-YAO.*

Sung dynasty. Aubergine-purple glaze (*ch'ieh-tzu*) with design in relief. (Catalogue of Hsiang.)
Height, 3 inches. (See page 53.)



their inferiority from an artistic point of view can scarcely be questioned. Brilliant and pure as is the colour of their decoration, and skilfully executed as are their miniature designs, they lack the dazzling contrast shown by the *Kai-pien-yao's* snow-white waxy body and its deep but soft blue ornamentation.

In the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang six specimens of *Hsuan-tê* blue-and-white ware are depicted, under the name of *Ming Hsuan-yao*. This method of distinguishing wares by the year-name of the period of their production came into general vogue among Chinese connoisseurs as far back as the fifteenth century, but the reader must understand that under the title *H'suan-yao* not blue-and-white porcelain alone but all the choice varieties of the reign are included. H'siang's specimens are small pieces — an ink-pallet, 3½ inches long; a miniature vase, 2 or 3 inches high; a jar in the form of a goose, 6 inches long; an elephant-shaped jar, 6 inches long; a tea-cup, 2½ inches in diameter, and a lamp, 5 inches high and 4½ inches in diameter. The decorative designs on all these examples, the tea-cup excepted, are wholly subordinate to the shapes of the pieces. There is no attempt to convert the surface into a painter's canvas. The brilliant tone of the blue, the pure white "mutton-fat-like" colour of the body, and the caligraphic excellence of the year-mark — these are things which constitute the important "points" of the specimens. The subject on the tea-cup — a gnarled pine-tree, with orchids and fungus springing from the grass beneath — is eulogised as being "evidently from the pencil of a celebrated landscape painter." But the remaining designs are essentially of the formal, mechanical type, as becomes the pieces to which they are applied. Unfortunately the artist employed by H'siang to portray these specimens did not think it worth while to give representations of the under surfaces, showing the nature of the *pâte*. Neither are his reproductions so accurate as to convey an exact idea of the surface. Were it known certainly either that the *pâte* was reddish brown, or that the glaze was crackled, these examples could be confidently classed with the soft-paste variety. The descriptions in the text indicate pretty clearly, however, that they do belong to that category. Concerning the tea-cup, which is from the collection of H'siang himself, the author says that it was one of a set of four, purchased from a collector at Wu-hsing for ten taels. It will presently be seen that the value put upon such specimens increased largely in later years.

Among these six specimens there are two which H'siang describes as having millet-like elevations in the glaze. This feature, not without value in the eyes of Chinese connoisseurs, appears to have been produced by combined processes of insufflation and immersion. Glazing material of a certain consistency having been first blown over the biscuit through a tube covered with very thin gauze, and having been sun-dried for a time, the whole piece was afterwards covered with a thinner glaze by dipping. Such a strange and troublesome *tour de force* was only employed in exceptional cases and is not to be regarded as an essential mark of excellence. The resulting granulations, compared in China to millet seed, were known in Japan as *mashihada*, or pear's rind. At comparatively modern epochs they became larger, until finally the surface of the glaze assumed a lumpy appearance, more curious than beautiful. This criticism, however, must not be understood as applicable to specimens of earlier date than the end of the last century. The granulated glazes of the *Ming* and principal *Tsing* factories were both interesting and attractive. In the *Tao-lu* it is nevertheless stated that this *Tsung-yen-yao*, or ware *à boutons d'Aralia*, which is the Chinese term for strongly chagrined glaze, was classed among ordinary porcelains and did not rise to the dignity of a really choice production. It was, in fact, hard-paste porcelain.

Since Chinese connoisseurs place the *Hsuan-tê* era at the head of blue-and-white porcelain epochs, it might be expected that the names of some of its distinguished keramists would have been handed down to posterity. But one only is mentioned, an artist called Lo, whose specialty was the delineation of fights between grasshoppers. Fashionable folks of Lo's time are said to have amused themselves pitting these insects against each other.

The year-mark of the *Hsuan-tê* period is *Hsuan-tê nien chi*, " manufactured in the Hsuan-tê " (era). Frequently in this, as in all the *Ming* periods, the year-mark was prefixed by the ideographs *Ta-ming*, signifying " Great *Ming*."

The three eras immediately following *Hsuan-tê* were *Chang-tung*, from 1436 to 1449; *Chiang-tai*, from 1450 to 1456, and *Tien-shun*, from 1457 to 1464. They produced nothing specially worthy of note, and their year-marks are rarely found upon keramic specimens. No reference is made in Chinese works to the manufactures of this interval of nearly thirty years, though the nine years (1426–1435) of Hsuan-tê's reign receive extended and enthusiastic notice. It is not easy to account for this silence or for the comparative absence of specimens bearing the *cachet* of any of the three reigns. That fine pieces were manufactured there can be little doubt, and it is known that the supply of choice Mohammedan blue did not fail. Probably the most reasonable conclusion is that the *Hsuan-tê* types being closely adhered to by keramists and recognised as standards of excellence by connoisseurs during the years immediately succeeding the celebrated era of their production, the works of those years failed to obtain distinctive recognition.

The next era, *Chêng-hwa*, which continued from 1465 to 1488, was in some respects even more remarkable than the *Hsuan-tê* era. The supply of imported Mohammedan blue is said to have failed, and the potters were obliged to content themselves with native mineral. But whatever pigment they employed, it is certain that many pieces of great brilliancy and beauty were produced. The decoration differs from that of the *Hsuan-tê* epoch in one important respect, namely, that whereas the latter conveys the impression of being engraved in the *pâte*, the former is of a more superficial character. Thus is furnished a suggestion as to the difference between the imported and the native mineral in the matter of behaviour during manufacture; a difference that may be independently gathered from the text of the records. The Mohammedan blue was capable of resisting the temperature of the open furnace; the Chêkiang blue could not be used except on porcelain protected by muffles. The result was that, in the case of the former, the designs became, as it were, wedded to the *pâte*, thus acquiring remarkable depth and softness. With regard to general technique, however, the *Chêng-hwa* blue-and-white ware is not at all inferior to that of *Hsuan-tê*. Some connoisseurs, indeed, give the palm to the former, and all agree that the artistic skill shown by the *Chêng-hwa* decorators was distinctly superior to that of their predecessors. The *Tao-lu* says of the *Chêng-hwa-yao* ware: "As for the blue employed, it was of ordinary quality. In so far as this point is concerned, the *Chên-hwa* ware fell far below the ware of *Hsuan-tê*. But the former surpassed all antecedent and subsequent productions in regard to painting and coloured enamels. Its merit consisted in the skill of the painters and the fineness of the colouring matters." The author is here speaking chiefly of porcelain decorated with vitrifiable enamels over the glaze, a class of production that does not belong to this section of the subject. But his verdict as to the pictorial skill of the *Chêng-hwa* decorators certainly embraces blue-and-white porcelain also. It will be understood, of course, that allusion is here made to *Kai-pien-yao* (soft-paste porcelain). In all eras this ware stands at the head of blue-and-white specimens.

Need it be said that genuine examples of soft-paste *Hsuan-yao* and *Chêng-hwa-yao* are well-nigh unprocurable? Their Chinese possessors set an almost prohibitive value on them. In judging their authenticity, what the connoisseur has to examine first is the colour and nature of the *pâte*. It should be fine as pipe-clay and of distinctly reddish brown tinge. Sometimes in *Chêng-hwa* specimens the colour of the biscuit shows through its covering, and imparts a pearly grey tinge to the surface of the piece. Soft and beautiful as is the effect of this transmitted tone, it scarcely ranks as high as the snowy wax-like white of the choicest *Kai-pien*. The decoration should always be finely and strongly executed, and the closer the blue approximates to the typical brilliancy and purity of the Mohammedan mineral, the higher the rank of the specimen. The glaze should be as smooth as velvet to the touch, and the crackle must not be so strong as to constitute a striking feature. No large examples of soft-paste blue-and-white *Hsuan-yao* or *Chêng-hwa-yao* are known to exist. The pieces depicted in H'siang's "Illustrated Catalogue" are of diminutive size, and the collector may safely regard them as typical.

Of the ordinary hard-paste blue-and-white *Chêng-hwa* porcelain, there is not much to be said. It has virtually no place in the Western collector's field, for the only surviving specimens of it are a few plates, bowls, censers, and so forth. It presents, however, one interesting feature. In its decoration white designs on a blue ground are found; the fore-runners of the celebrated "Hawthorn Pattern," so much prized in Europe and America to-day. The style may have existed before, but there is no evidence of the fact. It makes its first known appearance on undoubtedly genuine specimens af *Chêng-hwa* porcelain. Not yet, indeed, had the idea been developed of the "Hawthorn Pattern" proper — that is to say, branches and blossoms of white plum in a blue field. What appears is a clouded blue ground with floral subjects, birds and so forth, in white. Very soon, however, the typical "Hawthorn" was produced, as Japanese evidence shows. Within forty years of the expiration of the *Chêng-hwa* era, the potteries at Ching-tê-chên were visited by a Japanese expert, Gorodayu

Shonzui, the originator of porcelain manufacture in his country. In his day the "Hawthorn" design was certainly employed by Chinese decorators, for it figured conspicuously on his own pieces, though not as a principal motive.

The high reputation enjoyed by the *Chêng-hwa* ware led to its extensive imitation in later times. No mark, perhaps, has been more forged than that of *Ta-Ming Chêng-hwa nien-chi*. Even the potters of the *Kanghsi* era (1661–1722), whose productions were well worthy to stand on their own merits, did not hesitate to manufacture imitations of the celebrated *Ming* wares. Reproductions by such experts were little, if at all, inferior to their originals. But the case is different in the present modern times, when a hopelessly deteriorated art endeavours to conceal its palpable shortcomings behind the *cachet* of famous periods. It may be well, therefore, to warn collectors against the delusion that large vases, big bowls, and imposing jars which bear the *Chêng-hwa* mark, really date from that era, or reproduce the fine qualities of its manufactures. The rare examples of genuine early *Ming* blue-and-white hard-paste porcelain that come into the market, are small pieces, not at all likely to strike the eye of an ordinary connoisseur, and generally commanding prices out of apparent proportion to their merits. On the other hand, it is difficult to furnish any written data whereon to base an accurate estimate of the period of a hard-paste specimen. The *pâte* of the *Chêng-hwa* porcelain, like that of all the *Ming* wares, is hard, heavy, and close grained, and the timbre remarkably sharp and clear. Occasionally one finds clinging to the bases of bowls and plates, fragments of the sand with which the bottom of the oven was strewn before the stoving. This technical accident, although from its nature likely to occur in the case of inferior wares alone, is not uncommonly seen in pieces upon which great pains were evidently lavished. One peculiarity, which, though not confined to wares of the *Chêng-hwa* era, is perhaps more noticeable in them than in any other Chinese porcelains, is that within the circular base of the piece a number of hair lines radiate towards the centre, as though the glazing material had been laid on with a paint brush. Such, indeed, was probably the case. The base of a piece was always the last part which a Chinese potter finished. After the decoration and glaze had been applied to the body, the specimen was replaced on the wheel for the purpose of removing the superfluous clay which, adhering to the base, had hitherto served as a means of supporting the piece during the various processes of manufacture. The glazing of the base was then effected, and a brush would have been a convenient method of performing the operation. Why, however, evidences of such a process should be particularly visible in pieces manufactured during the first cycle of the *Ming* dynasty, and especially during the *Chêng-hwa* era, there is nothing to indicate, and perhaps it would be misleading to regard them as distinctive of such pieces, whatever some connoisseurs may allege.

The next year-period after *Chêng-hwa* was *Hung-chih* (1488–1506). It was not remarkable for blue-and-white porcelains. The supply of fine cobalt, from native and foreign sources alike, is said to have failed, and the manufacture of ware decorated with that mineral under the glaze consequently received a check. The mark of the era — *Ta-Ming Hung-chih nien chi* — is rarely found on porcelains of the class now under consideration.

The following period — *Chêng-tê* (1506–1522) — is more important. The Governor of Yünnan succeeded in procuring a fresh supply of the celebrated Mohammedan blue, and with it many beautiful porcelains were decorated. They are said to have been comparable with pieces of the *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa* eras. Few of them, however, appear to have survived, and they certainly possessed no features to distinguish them above their immediate predecessors. It is mentioned in the *Tao-lu* that during this era the workmen of the imperial factory dishonestly sold pieces of the precious Mohammedan blue to private potters, and that rules of great strictness were adopted by the superintendent of the kilns to put an end to the practice. Judging by the value set upon the imported mineral and by the details recorded with reference to the failure or renewal of the supply, one is inclined to suppose that its colour must have been exceptionally beautiful. But there is a strong probability that the reputation it enjoyed was partly due to the inexperience of Chinese keramists. Certainly in later times, when, being thrown on their own resources, necessity stimulated their inventive faculties, they succeeded in so preparing and employing their native cobalt as to obtain a colour scarcely, if at all, inferior to the finest *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa* blue. The mark of this period is *Ta-Ming Chêng-tê nien chi*. It is seldom found upon blue-and-white porcelain.

Perhaps it will be wise to remind the reader that, though no repeated reference to the distinction between soft-paste and hard-paste porcelain is here made in each account of the products of an era, the difference must never be lost sight of. Soft-paste blue-and-white ware stands always at the head of its class, and is separated by a long interval from every competitor.

The *Chêng-tê* period was followed by *Chia-ching* (1522–1567). The year-mark of this era — *Ta-Ming Chia-ching mien chi* — has been more abundantly forged than that of any other period except *Chêng-hwa.* From this fact alone may be inferred the quantity and reputation of the porcelains manufactured by the *Chia-ching* keramists. This was indeed the last era of the *Ming* dynasty when Mohammedan blue was procurable. Another noteworthy fact is that the supply of porcelain required for the use of the Court had now become enormous. Pieces were ordered not by dozens, but by hundreds. Scores of thousands of vases, bowls, and other utensils went up every year to Peking, and the resources of the factories at Ching-tê-chêng were subjected to an ever-increasing strain. Lists of the porcelains requisitioned by the Court during this and the two subsequent reigns are preserved in Chinese records and have been translated by Dr. Bushell. They are interesting not alone as a record of the nature of the pieces required for imperial use, but also as indicating the style of decoration then adopted. Dr. Bushell observes that "the designs are said to have been principally derived from brocaded satin and ancient embroidery," and that "most of the subjects enumerated are still employed in ornamenting the imperial porcelain of the present day." The following is the portion of the list bearing upon our immediate subject, namely, porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze: —

LIST OF BLUE-AND-WHITE PORCELAINS REQUISITIONED FOR IMPERIAL USE IN THE 8TH YEAR OF THE *CHIA-CHING* ERA (1529). (TRANSLATED BY DR. S. W. BUSHELL.)

Bowls decorated with dragons pursuing pearls; *outside* a balance weighing gold and playing children.

Bowls with sprays of flowers completely covering the ground *inside* and *out*.

Bowls with bamboo leaves and polyporus fungus, medallions containing dragons among clouds, dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers.

Bowls decorated, *outside*, with sea-waves and eight dragons emerging therefrom holding up the mystical diagrams; *inside*, with the three Taoist alchemists compounding the *elixir vitæ*.

Bowls with dragons, phœnixes, and other birds, *outside;* dragons among clouds, *inside.*

Bowls with four fishes, mackerel, carp, marbled perch and another, *outside;* birds flying in clouds, *inside.*

Tall Cups with celestial flowers under the inscription *shou shan fu hai*, "old as the hills, rich as the sea," two Taoist genii, *inside.*

Wine Cups with a pair of dragons among clouds, *outside;* dragons mounting upwards, *inside.*

Wine Cups with antique dragons, and, *inside*, storks flying in clouds.

Tall Cups with a pair of dragons; a pair of phœnixes, *inside.*

Tea Cups with playing boys and the flowers of the four seasons, peony, lotus, chrysanthemum, and plum, *outside;* dragons soaring from waves into clouds, *within.*

Tea Cups with dragons emerging from water; with lions, *inside.*

Wine Cups inscribed *fu shou kang ning*, "happiness, longevity, health and peace."

Tea Cups with a myriad flowers inside and out; also dragons grasping pearls, *outside.*

Cups with playing boys, *outside;* dragons among clouds, *inside.*

Tea Cups with dragon medallions and water caltrops; dragons among clouds, *inside.*

Cups with clouds and dragons, *outside;* floral medallions, *inside.*

Wine Jars (beakers) decorated with the emblems of longevity, the fir, bamboo, and plum.

Dishes (saucer shaped) with floral ground *inside* and *out.*

Dishes decorated *inside* and *out* with cranes flying through clouds.

Dishes with dragons coiling through Indian lotus flowers, *outside;* phœnixes flying through flowers, *inside.*

Dishes with fruit-bearing lotus, *outside;* floral medallions, *inside.*

Dishes with phœnixes flying through flowers, *outside;* ascending and descending dragons sporting, *inside.*

Jars with covers, with branched fungus supporting the eight precious emblems.

Jars with the eight Taoist immortals crossing the sea.

Jars with children playing masquerade revels.

Jars with peacocks and mutan peonies.

Jars with lions sporting with embroidered balls.

Jars with sprays of fairy flowers bearing the eight precious emblems.

Jars with floral ground, different kinds of fish and water plants.

Jars with the eight famous horses of the ancient Emperor Mu Wang.

Jars with waterfalls of Ssuch'üan province and flying lions.

Jars with waves and flames supporting the eight mystic diagrams.

Jars of octagonal form, the lobes filled with dragons in sea-waves.

Vases with fabulous lion and dragons.

Vases with branching fungus and the emblematic flowers of the four seasons.

Large round dishes with the flowers of the four seasons, *outside;* three rams as emblems of spring, *sang yan k'ai t'ai, inside.*

Dishes with nine dragons and flowers, *outside;* clouds and dragons above a border of sea-waves, *inside.*

Dishes with sea-waves enveloping flying lions and dragons holding up the characters for happiness and longevity.

Dishes with four Taoists, *outside;* cranes flying in clouds.

Dishes with clouds and dragons, *outside;* the eight Taoist immortals worshipping the god of longevity, *inside.*

Boxes with covers for holding fruit, with cranes and dragons flying among clouds.

Boxes with fabulous lions and dragons.

Boxes with dragons and phœnixes and a group of immortals worshipping the emblem of longevity.

Large Bowls for gold-fish, decorated with a pair of dragons.

Fish Bowls with dragons and clouds painted *inside.*

Large Wine Vessels of oval form decorated with sprays of lotus supporting the eight precious symbols and the eight Buddhist emblems, a balance weighing gold, and playing children.

Wine Vessels with sprays of lotus supporting the hundred forms of the longevity character.

This list unfortunately gives no indication of the nature of the wares enumerated. But it is safe to conclude that the greater part, if not the whole, were of the soft-paste (*Kai-pien*) variety. Porcelain supplied for use in the imperial palace would naturally be of the choicest kind.

The *Tao-lu* alludes in the following terms to the blue-and-white porcelain of the *Chia-ching* era:—"Vases in blue monochrome, manufactured with the Mohammedan mineral, were alone in favour, on account of the charming tone of their deep-coloured glaze. For the same reason vases painted with blue flowers of the *Chia-ching* era also enjoyed considerable reputation."

The next two periods, *Lung-ching* (1567–1573) and *Wan-li* (1573–1620), may be conveniently classed together as to their blue-and-white porcelains. In the *Tao-lu* their wares are called *Lung-wan-yao,* as though no distinction existed between the two reigns. The important points to be noted with regard to these wares are that Mohammedan blue was no longer procurable and that the materials for manufacturing the porcelain mass had become in part exhausted and in part inferior. It is exceedingly probable, though the fact cannot be asserted with absolute confidence, that from 1570, approximately, until the end of the *Ming* dynasty (1644), very little soft-paste blue-and-white porcelain was manufactured at Ching-tê-chên. A principal ingredient for its biscuit was taken, as has been already stated, from the bed of the river on which the city stood, and this source of supply came to an end or ceased to be available during the *Lung-ching* era. On the other hand, large quantities of hard-paste porcelain were made. Numerous surviving examples may be seen. In all of them the biscuit is dense and heavy. Small pieces show excellent technique, but the larger are more or less clumsy and roughly finished. Their bottoms, instead of being turned on the wheel as was the case with preceding wares of the better class, generally exhibit marks of the knife used to remove superfluous clay. Often, too, the bottom is not depressed, but filled up level with the rim. In such specimens the year mark is written either on the outside of the piece — usually round the upper or lower edge — or in a rectangular space cut in the centre of the under surface and glazed. The type of blue-and-white *Lung-wan-yao* is essentially thick and solid, to which durable quality may doubtless be ascribed the fact that many examples survive. The quality of their blue decoration is characteristic. Its colour is deep and full, but distinctly tinged with purple. Seldom does it approach the brilliant pure tone of its celebrated predecessors. The body of the piece in a marked degree partakes also of that defect more or less common in all hard-paste blue-and-white porcelains: its white, pervaded by a tinge of blue, contrasts weakly with the colour of the decoration. With regard to the designs chosen by the potters, they became more elaborate in proportion as the ware forfeited its claims to consideration on account of brilliant colour and fine *pâte.*

About this period the use of red under the glaze began to be largely resorted to. Red and blue are the only colours thus employed by the Chinese potters, the red varying from brilliant vermilion to maroon and liver-colour. The date of their first appearance in combination is not easy to determine. Tradition and the evidence of existing specimens go to show that the innovation may probably be ascribed to the second half of the sixteenth century. The fashion is supposed by certain commentators to have owed something of its popularity to the failure of choice cobalt supplies from foreign sources and native mines alike, decoration in blue alone thus ceasing to be sufficiently attractive. But such a theory is not reconcilable with either the past or the subsequent history of the ware. Red by itself had already been used as a sub-glaze pigment during the *Hsuan-tê* era (1426–1436). Pieces of the choicest character were thus decorated. Five of them are figured in the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang, who speaks of them with great enthusiasm. The designs were simple. Fish (carp) were the favourite motive, and after them the "peach of longevity," or agarics (a species of fungus). These last were sometimes combined with different forms of the ideograph (*fu*), signifying "good fortune." According to the *Tao-lu*, the number of fish, peaches, or agarics depicted was always three, and the number of ideographs five. But H'siang's illustrations show that though this may have been true with regard to the peaches, the rule did not invariably hold in the instance of the fishes. The ground of H'siang's specimens is said to have been "pure as driven snow," the fish "boldly outlined and red as fresh blood or vermilion, of a brilliant colour, dazzling the eye." Tiny cups or miniature bowls seem to have been the only examples surviving in H'siang's time. Of the cups decorated with peaches he adds that "only two or three are known to exist within the four seas." So much prized were choice examples of early wares decorated in this style that they received the name of *Pao-ki*, or precious vases. Vulgar tradition says that the grand tone of the red was obtained by mixing powdered rubies with the colouring matter. But that is evidently a myth. The substance employed was a silicate of copper. Chinese connoisseurs seem to have preferred *Hsuan-tê* specimens of this class to all others, but there is no reason to doubt that pieces scarcely if at all inferior were produced by subsequent *Ming* potters at any rate up to the end of the sixteenth century, and such was certainly the case at the factories of *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung*, during the present dynasty.

From the list of porcelains requisitioned for the palace during the *Wan-li* era, it appears that red under the glaze constantly occurred side by side with blue. Appended is Dr. Bushell's translation of such portions of the list as have reference to this branch of the subject, including in the category specimens decorated with blue alone, or blue in combination with red, or red alone: —

LIST OF PORCELAINS DECORATED WITH BLUE, OR RED, OR BLUE AND RED, *SOUS COUVERTE*, REQUISITIONED FOR THE PALACE DURING THE ERA OF *WAN LI* (1573–1619).

N.B. — Where red decoration occurs, the fact is mentioned. Otherwise the reader may assume that the decoration is in blue alone.

Bowls decorated *outside* with lotus flowers, dragons and phœnixes in clouds, with interlacing sprays of Indian lotus and fairy flowers; *inside* with dragon medallions, a dragon band interrupted by the eight Buddhist emblems; on the *border* clouds with crested waves and sceptres, fragrant flowers, scroll waves, and plum blossom.

Bowls decorated *outside* with dragons and clouds, lotus flowers, fish, boys playing, the seal characters *fu*, *shou*, *kang*, *ning*, arabesques, sea monsters and lions playing with embroidered balls; *inside* with cranes and clouds, a single spray of lotus, lilies, sceptres and clouds; with the inscription *Ta-Ming Wan-li nein chih.*

Bowls, with, *outside*, dragon medallions, phœnixes, the eight precious symbols on brocaded ground, sea-waves, *fu*, *lu*, *shou*, the gods of happiness, rank, and longevity, and branching fungus; *inside*, a pair of dragons upholding longevity characters, jasmine flowers, and coloured phœnixes flying through the flowers of the four seasons.

Bowls with, *outside*, a pair of dragons, the eight immortals crossing the sea, boxes of the flowers of the four seasons; *inside*, full-faced dragons with seal longevity characters, a border of sceptres and hibiscus flowers, bamboo leaves and branching fungus.

Dishes with, *outside*, cloud dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers, interlacing sprays of fairy flowers, the fir, bamboo, and plum; *inside*, branches of the flowers of the four seasons, garlands of fruit in Mohammedan style, sceptres, the fir, bamboo, and plum, with a *border* of bamboo leaves and polyporus fungus.

Dishes with, *outside*, lotus flowers and dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers, the fir, bamboo, and plum, historical scenes with inscriptions in verse, playing boys; *inside*, a border of flower sprays and dragons, fragrant bamboo leaves and branching fungus, with dragons among clouds and flowers engraved under the glaze.

Dishes with, *outside*, medallions of fabulous animals and tigers, branching fungus, sceptres, fairy flowers, foreign pomegranates, and fragrant plants; *inside*, in the centre, dragons holding the characters *yung*, *pao*, *wan*, *shou;* on the border, phœnixes and fairy flowers, the inscription *yung pao hung fu ch'i t'ien* and playing boys.

Dishes with, *outside*, interlacing sprays of lotus with the eight precious emblems, dragons and phœnixes, fruit and flowers, the fir, bamboo, and plum, Sanscrit characters, separate sprays of flowers of the four seasons; *inside*, in the centre, dragons in the midst of flowers, on the border, flowers of the seasons, historical scenes, bamboo leaves and fungus, longevity inscriptions and peonies.

Saucer-shaped Plates with, *outside*, phœnixes flying through flowers, flowers, fruit and birds, longevity flower scrolls, floral brocades, flowering plants and animals, lotus leaves and dragons; *inside*, the eight precious symbols, antique dragons, celestial flowers supporting Sanscrit Buddhist inscriptions, dragons and phœnixes and historical scenes.

Cup with, *outside*, the peach tree of Taoist fable with antique longevity characters inscribed on the fruit, sprays of flowers of the four seasons, Sanscrit inscriptions; *inside*, clouds and cranes, pearls emitting flames, a pair of dragons and clouds engraved under the glaze, lotus flowers and fish in azure waves.

Wine Cups with, *outside*, dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers, the eight immortals worshipping the god of longevity, arabesques of fairy flowers; *inside*, dragon medallions, lotus flowers and fish, river plants supporting Sanscrit inscriptions.

Cups with, *outside*, clouds and dragons, jasmine flowers, birds, ladies and playing children, the eight Buddhist symbols on fungus branches; *inside*, grapes, sprays of flowers of the four seasons, Sanscrit dharani and longevity garlands.

Cups with, *outside*, dragons flying through flowers, historical scenes, nine blue monsters in red sea-waves; *inside*, sceptres and fragrant plants, plum flowers on wave ground, pheasants flying through flowers, red sea-waves with white crests.

Boxes with sceptres, clouds and dragons, dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers, the inscription *fêng t'iao yü shun*, *t'ien hsia t'ai p'ing*, "Propitious wind and favourable rain, peace throughout the empire," a head with hair dressed in four puffs inscribed *yung pao ch'ang ch'un*, "Ever preserving lasting spring!" the eight diagrams and symbols of *yin* and *yang*, figures of immortals with propitious inscriptions.

Boxes with strange monsters in attendance on the celestial dragon, sceptres, scroll brocades, floral ground patterns, hibiscus flowers on brocaded ground, musical instruments, flowers and fruit, birds, insects and flowers.

Boxes with propitious sentences on the *sides;* on the *cover*, dragons, the flowers of the seasons and historical scenes.

Wine Cups with, *outside*, flying lions in sea-waves, interlacing sprays of flowers of the four seasons, jasmine flowers, monsters and tigers, pomegranates and fungus; *inside*, hibiscus flowers and moutan peonies, sea-waves and fairy flowers.

Wine Bowls with interlacing sprays of golden lotus flowers supporting antique longevity characters.

Censers with the symbol of light and darkness and the eight diagrams, fungus branches, landscapes, clouds, and dragons.

Censers with, *outside*, lotus and fragrant flowers, with sceptres, dragons and clouds in relief, arabesques of fragrant flowers, dragons and fairy flowers executed in openwork, fungus branches and ancient coins.

Vases with dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers, flowering plants and animals, longevity fungus, brocades and pheasants, peonies, cranes in clouds, the eight diagrams and the hemp-leaved Indian lotus.

Vases with dragons and clouds above clumps of reeds, the fir, bamboo, and plum, ornamental designs in the form of the double gourd.

Vases with flowers, fruit and birds, fragrant plants and insects, historical scenes.

Slop Boxes with a pair of dragons among flowers and flocks of magpies.

Slop Boxes with clouds and dragons, arabesques of fragrant plants, historical scenes, flowers, fruit and branching fungus.

Vinegar Bottles with dragons in clouds and twining sprays of fairy flowers.

Chessboards with clouds and dragons.

Hanging Oil-Lamp with sea-waves, dragons and clouds, the flowers of the four seasons, golden chrysanthemums and hibiscus flowers.

Pricket Candlesticks with longevity inscriptions and emblems, the eight precious symbols, fairy flowers, sceptres and dragons in clouds.

Pricket Candlesticks with jewel mountains surrounded by sea-waves with dragons in clouds, medallions with boys plucking olea fragrans flowers, water-plants, lotus leaves and flowers.

Jars with nozzles for oil-wicks decorated with dragons and phœnixes flying through flowers of the four seasons.

Screens with brocaded ground, flowers, fruit and birds; the border, two dragons grasping pearls.

Pencil Barrels with brocaded ground, fairy flowers winding through clouds, branching fungus, the river pictures and writing of ancient story.

Pencil Handles with the eight precious symbols and dragon medallions.

Perfume Boxes with kylin and round ornament, winding sprays of fairy flowers, spiral scrolls, flowers and fruit, and eight Buddhist emblems, branching fungus, sea-waves and plum blossom.

Fan Boxes with dragons among clouds and spiral scroll ornament.

Pencil Rests with sea-waves executed in relief and three dragons in openwork.

Pallet Water Bottles with couchant dragons, jewel-bearing elephants and figure scenes.

Betel-nut Boxes with historical scenes, fragrant plants and lotus petals.

Hat Boxes with brocaded ground in round patterns and dragons coiling through the flowers of the four seasons.

Handkerchief Boxes with, *outside*, brocaded ground patterns, a pair of dragons supporting the inscription, "Ever preserving long life: tribute arriving from the four seas!"; historical scenes and the flowers of the season; *inside*, the fungus of longevity, the fir, bamboo, plum and orchids.

Garden Seats carved in openwork with dragons grasping pearls, flying dragons, lions, and sea-horses.

The mark of the *Lung-ching* era is *Ta-Ming Lung-ching nien chi*, and that of the *Wan-li* era, *Ta-Ming Wan-li nien chi.* The former occurs much more rarely than the latter, which is not only found on a tolerably numerous class of authentic specimens, but has also been extensively forged. Even at this time, when the markets of China have been so persistently and diligently exploited during a quarter of a century, the collector may still procure good examples of *Wan-li* blue-and-white. They are solid, and in many cases somewhat clumsy, but these defects are often relieved by brilliancy and decorative boldness, and choice specimens support comparison with the work of other eras. The glaze, too, is rich and lustrous, though lacking in purity of tone. From the factories of these eras — *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* — came the comparatively small number of surviving *Ming* blue-and-white porcelains that attain any considerable dimensions. All the pieces that remain from preceding eras are small, the great majority not exceeding a few inches in height. This is absolutely true of soft-paste porcelain in respect of every reign in the dynasty.

But in the *Wan-li* period, when four thousand flower-vases of various shapes and sizes and five thousand jars with covers appear in the imperial requisition at one time, the manufacturers of hard-paste porcelain seem to have frequently turned out pieces of imposing proportions. Vases of huge dimensions had, indeed, been manufactured at an earlier date. The *Tao-lu* states that special kilns existed at Ching-tê-chên for baking monster bowls, vases, and jars, as much as six feet high and having biscuit five inches thick. Some of these were decorated with floral designs, but the majority had dragons among clouds or waves, a subject repeated *ad nauseam* upon Chinese porcelains of all periods. They were stoved one or two at a time, and their baking occupied nine days. During the first seven days a slow fire was kept up, with the object of gradually expelling the moisture contained in the porcelain mass. Then for two days and two nights the furnace was raised to such a temperature that the porcelain became perfectly red and afterwards white. After this the fire was extinguished, and the aperture of the kiln having been sealed, ten days were allowed for the cooling process. Of these monster pieces some survive in Chinese collections, but few have found their way Westward. At what era their manufacture was first undertaken the records do not say, but it appears to have been continued down to the end of the *Wan-li* period (1619). Specimens of smaller but still imposing dimensions dating from the latter period are familiar to American and European collectors. They are, for the most part, fish-bowls and jars decorated with dragons; their *pâte* dense and of medium quality, their glaze lustrous but lacking purity, and the blue *sous couverte* of deep, purplish tone. It may, in short, be stated with regard to all the decorated porcelains dating from the final reigns of the *Ming* dynasty that they are distinguished by strength of colour. A brief acquaintance with genuine specimens enables the amateur to recognise these porcelains with tolerable certainty, for in no era, previous or subsequent, did the potter succeed in imparting to his *sous-couverte* blue a more distinctly encaustic character. It seems as though the colour were veritably burned into the *pâte*, and since the glaze is exceptionally solid and lustrous, the ultimate effect is one of softness and strength very admirably combined. For purposes of room decoration in Western houses the blue-and-white porcelains of *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* possess special merits, since they adapt themselves to almost any situation. In order to bring out the noble glow and richness of *Kang-hsi* Hawthorns it is essential that they be placed in a full clear light: the more directly the sun strikes on them, the greater the brilliancy, glow, and warmth of their effect. The delicate richness of fine *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* pieces, though not of the Hawthorn class, are scarcely less dependent on the light they receive. But the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* blues stand effectively in any nook or corner: even in a sombre atmosphere their decorative strength is not to be subdued.

In the *Tao-lu* the name of a celebrated keramist, Tsui, is recorded as having flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century. He is said to have excelled in imitating the blue-and-white soft-paste porcelain of the *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa* eras. His fidelity as a copyist extended, of course, to the marks on his originals. Few as are the names of Chinese keramic experts remembered by posterity, fewer still are the instances of potters putting their own names on their works. Thus there is no hope of identifying the maker of a piece, and the fact that such and such great artists lived at such and such eras, possesses only historic interest.

With the close of the *Wan-li* era (1619), the production of *Ming* porcelains may be said to have terminated. The dynasty continued to occupy the throne until 1644, but its last two decades were so disturbed by struggles with the Tartars that the keramic industry was virtually deprived of imperial patronage, as well as of the custom of the upper classes. It is, however, mentioned in the *Tao-lu* that during these years of comparative inactivity there were produced, at the factories in *Siao-nan* street, Ching-tê-chên, various porcelains of small size. They were called "*Siao-nan-yao*," after the place of their manufacture, but sometimes also *Hia-moh-yao*, or "frog-sized wares," in allusion to their tiny, squat form. Their *pâte* had a yellow tinge; they were thin, but very solid, and in such of them as had blue decoration *sous couverte*, the designs were limited to flowers and leaves of the epidendrum (Chinese, *Lan*) — a plant that has always been highly esteemed by Chinese and Japanese — or to one or two circles round their outer rim. Specimens of this insignificant character do not redeem the general unproductiveness of the era as to blue-and-white porcelain.

The dynasty of *Tsing* Tartars, now ruling in China, was established at Peking in 1644. During the first reign, *Shun-chih* (1645–1661), no marked revival of art industries seems to have taken place. A certain quantity of blue-and-white hard-paste porcelain was, however, manufactured. Such specimens as survive are of fair quality, heavy, solid, somewhat rudely finished below, and generally having no depression in the under surface; characteristics that render them apt to be confounded with ware of the *Wan-li* era, especially as the tone of the blue decoration is virtually alike in both periods. The mark of the era is *Ta-Tsin Shun-chih nien chi.* It is seldom met with.

With the accession of the renowned *Kang-hsi* (1661–1722), second sovereign of the *Tsing* dynasty, the keramic art began once more to flourish. Under his enlightened and liberal rule the potteries at Ching-tê-chên developed a degree of excellence and prosperity without parallel. The era has been well called the golden age of Chinese keramics. Tang, an expert of remarkable ability, superintended the factories at Ching-tê-chên. Chinese records say that he held constant communion with the Genius of Pottery, and that the ware made under his direction was necessarily of super-excellent quality. His achievements almost justify this superstition from a Chinese point of view. With regard to the blue-and-white porcelains of his time, it will perhaps seem fit to speak first of the so-called "Hawthorn Pattern," so highly and not undeservedly popular among Western collectors. It need scarcely be premised that the term "Hawthorn" is a figment of Western fancy. The design referred to is really flowers of the plum in white on a blue ground, and porcelains thus decorated are known to Chinese connoisseurs and dealers as *Mei-hwa-yao*, or "plum-blossom ware." The idea of decoration in white on a blue ground had its origin long before the *Kang-hsi* era. It had been conceived as far back as the *Chêng-hwa* epoch (1465–1487), and may be of even greater antiquity. But there are no "Hawthorns," in the Western sense of the term, dating from the *Ming* dynasty. Previously to the *Kang-hsi* era the method had been merely accessory: it was used in parts only of the general design. From about the middle of the seventeenth century Chinese potters began to act upon the inspiration of entirely covering the surface of the biscuit (beneath the glaze) with rich, brilliant blue, among which flowering branches of plum, or, in less elaborate specimens, petals only of the blossom, were reserved, showing white and soft upon a ground of deep, glowing colour. Unquestionably this fashion of decoration is one of the most beautiful ever invented in China or anywhere else. It has every quality that should be possessed by ornamental porcelain — grace, softness, solidity, brilliancy, richness, and delicacy. Yet that Chinese connoisseurs did not rank it particularly high is proved by the nature of the specimens upon which the decoration is chiefly found; as, for example, ginger-pots, sugar-jars, and vases of comparatively mediocre quality. Neither the experts nor the virtuosi of the Middle Kingdom appreciated the charms of a ware for pieces of which every Western collector of taste searches with wise avidity. The colour and tone of the blue in the best Hawthorns of the *Kang-hsi* period show that a mineral was used in no respect inferior to the best Mohammedan pigment. An interesting fact is that the first Japanese potter — Gorodayu Go-shonzui — who manufactured translucid porcelain, having visited China in 1510 to study keramic processes, returned to Japan with a conviction that sprays and blossoms of the plum were eminently suitable for purposes of porcelain decoration. Among all the specimens attributed to him there is scarcely one into whose decorative design the plum does not enter in some form or other. It is possible that the grace and appropriateness of such a motive may have specially appealed to Japanese taste; but inasmuch as Japan sat humbly at China's feet in the matter of keramics in the sixteenth century, and as many considerations must have swayed Shonzui to faithful imitation of his teachers' models, it seems a reasonable inference that his free use of the *meihwa* reflected the tendency of Chinese potters also in his time. This part of the subject has so much interest for American and European collectors that the portions of the *Tao-lu* bearing on the subject may be appended in full: —

> Porcelains decorated with blue *sous couverte*, whether round, square, or angular in shape, are distinguished by the epochs of their manufacture; as, for example, porcelains of *Hsuan-tê*, of *Chêng-hwa*, of *Chia-ching*, and of *Wan-li*. For the monochrome called *Chia-ching*, or blue of the sky after rain, azure has also to be combined with the glazing matter. The mineral is found in two districts of the province of Chê-kiang. Those who procure it go to the mountains and dig for it. They wash it, by means of baskets, in the mountain streams to remove the earthy matter adhering to it. It is dark yellow in colour. Large round pieces are of the first quality. They are distinguished by the names of the places whence they come. Traders carry them to the porcelain kilns, roast them there for three days, wash them carefully and sell them to the potters. There is a species of blue found in the mountains of Kiang-si and Kuan-tung, but it is pale in colour and incapable of enduring the action of the fire. It serves only for decorating common vases.

The same writer, quoting from an encyclopedia, says: —

Generally the matter used for painting blue porcelain is cobaltiferous manganese. It is found at no great distance below the surface of the ground, the excavators not being obliged to dig to a depth of more than one *mètre* at most. It occurs in all the provinces of the empire and there are three grades of it. Before use it has to be baked to red heat in a mass of clay. From each pound of mineral thus treated, barely seven ounces are obtained. Blue of the first quality is always used for the decoration of very fine porcelains, or on pieces destined for the palace, with dragon and phœnix designs. Thus 36 dollars must be spent to obtain thirteen *litres* of first-class blue; one-half of that sum for a similar quantity of second-class mineral, and one-seventh of it for the third-class variety. All the best blue used at Ching-tê-chên is found in the province of Chê-kiang. That found elsewhere is inferior. After the mineral has been roasted it is ground very fine in a mortar of unglazed porcelain, and afterwards moistened with water. When painted on the surface of the ware it is black, but becomes blue by exposure to the heat of the furnace.

It will be observed that in these extracts no mention is made of the *Hui-ching*, or Mohammedan blue. This choice mineral ceased, apparently, to be procurable after the *Chia-ching* era (1522–1566). The *Kang-hsi* potters and their successors used the native mineral only, but used it in such a manner as to obtain a colour little, if at all, inferior to that of the choicest *Ming* specimens. Many other details on the subject of cobalt are given in the *Tao-lu*, but they embody little information and are grouped in a confused manner. The substance of what they convey is that blue of the choicest quality was scarce, expensive, and difficult to prepare. Even when the best mineral was employed, any slight excess of temperature in the porcelain kiln sufficed to burn out its tint. There was, however, a particular variety capable of resisting great heat, and in all designs where very fine lines occurred, this blue had to be used. The duty of selecting the mineral devolved upon a special class of experts, and the whole art of refining and employing it was evidently carried to a high pitch of development. The result amply justified this toil, for the *Kang-hsi* era bequeathed to posterity porcelains of unsurpassed brilliancy and beauty.

Père d'Entrecolles, in his description of the processes witnessed by himself at the *Kang-hsi* factories, says that when a vase was intended to be entirely blue, it was dipped in a solution of cobalt. This method was not resorted to in the case of "Hawthorns." The pigment was laid on with a brush, not uniformly, but in overlapping layers, so as to produce the effect of clouds varying in depth and brilliancy. The beauty of the surface was wonderfully enhanced by this simple device. Sometimes a marbled or tessellated aspect was obtained by means of dark lines intersecting in diamonds or squares. The latter method, generally resorted to when the decoration consisted of clusters of petals only (without connecting branches or trunks), belongs to an inferior order of art conception, though what it loses through excessive formality is compensated in the opinion of many connoisseurs by the stronger play of reflected light on a surface thus treated.

In judging a specimen of "Hawthorn" the first point to be considered is the nature of the blue. The purer and more brilliant the colour, the better the specimen. Great depth, amounting almost to darkness, though highly prized by many connoisseurs for the sake of its fine contrast with the white design, is not an essential mark of quality. The design itself should be boldly and clearly executed. On the best pieces there is generally found a plum tree painted in its entirety, — branches, and flowers. But an even more pleasing method is to show the branches and their blossoms hanging down over the rim of the vase, as though the stem were within it. The commonest type has clusters of petals scattered regularly over the surface. In every case lustre and smoothness of glaze are important criteria. Spots where the surface has become rough and the blue verges upon black owing to faulty firing or an excess of moisture in the pigment, are emphatic blemishes. Finally the *pâte* should be tolerably fine and the bottom of the piece well finished.

Decoration in the "Hawthorn" style appears to have been applied to two classes of specimens only, pots for sugar or preserved ginger, and vases with trumpet-shaped necks. It is strange that these limits should have been observed. No explanation is furnished, but every collector is familiar with the fact. The finest and most imposing examples are the sugar-jars. They vary in size, from tiny pieces to specimens fifteen or sixteen inches high. Their shape is graceful and the swelling contours of the body are continued appropriately in the lid. It is on these jars that the beautiful "spray" decoration is chiefly found, and many of them show colour of most admirable depth and brilliancy. But the comparatively coarse use to which they have been applied has resulted in frequent accidents. Very rarely indeed does the collector find a flawless specimen with intact lid. In at least ninety-nine cases out of every hundred the bric-à-brac dealer is obliged to replace the original porcelain lid with a cover of carved teakwood. In Japan or Europe, where the art of repairing porcelain is understood, a very much larger number of these beautiful objects would have been preserved in a presentable condition. But the Chinese, curiously enough, never made the smallest progress in work which a people so appreciative of porcelain and technically so expert might have been expected to carry to a high degree of development. A Chinaman saw only two methods of dealing with fractured porcelain: either he cut down the piece until the injured section had disappeared, and there remained a truncated vase or a segment of a pot; or he bored a row of holes on either side of the fracture, and into them hammered little clamps of iron or copper. It was a frank kind of proceeding, but nothing clumsier or more disfiguring can well be conceived. The result of it all is that very few of the larger and finer types of "Hawthorns" have survived entire, and owing to the great and just esteem in which such pieces are held by European and American collectors, as well as to their comparative neglect by Chinese virtuosi, the majority of those procurable have already gravitated westward, and the Chinese market is virtually empty. Much of this applies to the ginger-pots also. They are smaller than the usual type of sugar-jar, being generally only ten or eleven inches in height; their contour is simpler and their lids are flat. As to colour, they stand neither higher nor lower than the sugar-jars, but they differ from the latter in the much more frequent tessellation of their surface, and in the more constant occurrence of the "petal-cluster" style of decoration as distinguished from the "spray." The trumpet-necked vases are the least attractive of all, their shape being apparently unsuited to the "Hawthorn" decoration. That is a matter of taste, however. In respect to quality, there is nothing primarily to choose between the three kinds, jars, pots and vases.

In many specimens of "Hawthorn" the surface is broken by white medallions, within which are painted formal designs, floral subjects, mythical animals or personages, in blue. In such cases the surface decoration is generally of the petal-cluster type, and the painting within the panels is weak and mechanical.

Marks of date are not found on "Hawthorns" of the *Kang-hsi* era; or, if they occur, are so rare as to be virtually non-existent for collectors' purposes. Sometimes a leaf of the artemisia, a conventional lotus, or a representation of the *Che* plant (silk-worm oak) is painted on the bottom of such specimens. The absence of a year-mark is partially explained by the fact that in 1667 the Emperor prohibited this manner of distinguishing porcelains, and at the same time ordered that verses, or historical quotations, recording the actions of great men, should not be used in decorating ware, since inscriptions that deserved reverence were thus condemned to share the fate of the perishable substance on which they were painted. There is no record to indicate that this prohibition was removed at a subsequent period of the same reign. Yet reasons exist for suspecting that such was the case. On specimens of seventeenth-century manufacture the *Kang-hsi* year-mark — *Ta-Tsing Kang-hsi nien chi*—certainly occurs much more rarely than might be expected, having regard to the great activity of the keramic industry at that epoch. But, on the other hand, it occurs too often to permit the supposi-

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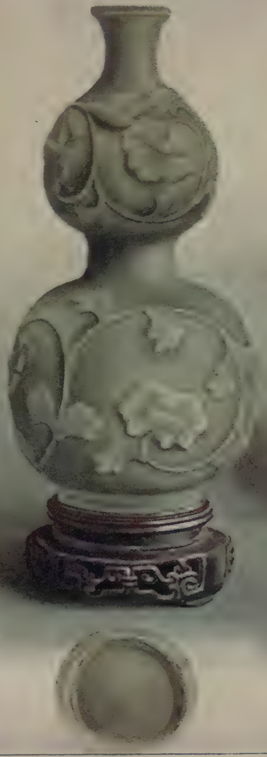

Fig. 2

Early Ming celadon [illegible]

[illegible]

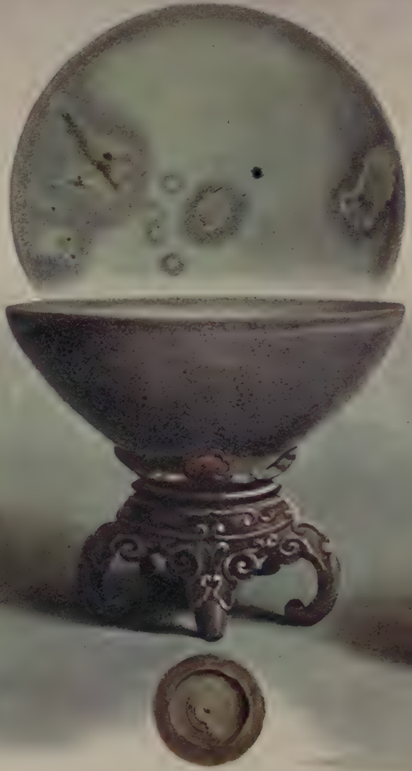

Fig. 1

Bowl [illegible]

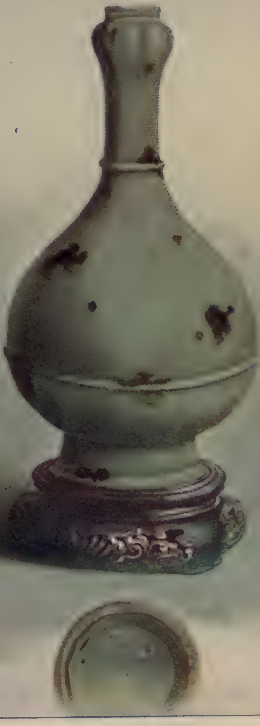

Fig. 3

[illegible]

tion that the imperial veto held good throughout the reign. *Kang-hsi* had only occupied the throne five years when the prohibition in question was issued. It is impossible to believe that the numerous and undoubtedly genuine surviving examples of porcelains bearing the mark of the epoch were manufactured during those five years. This observation applies, however, to wares other than those decorated with the Hawthorn Pattern. On them a year-mark is seldom, if ever, found. In the great majority of cases they are without a mark of any description, the bottoms being quite plain, or having only a blue ring within the rim.

The "Hawthorn Pattern" is here placed first among the blue-and-white porcelains of the *Kang-hsi* era, not because it is technically entitled to that rank, but because of its merits from a decorative point of view, the reputation it justly enjoys among European and American collectors, and its special connection with the period. It may be safely asserted that all really fine "Hawthorns" belong to the *Kang-hsi* era, and that their manufacture virtually came to an end at its close.

The master-piece of the time, in blue-and-white, is the *Kai-pien-yao*, or soft-paste *craquelé* porcelain, which now began to be produced again in all its former beauty. Of this charming ware so much has been already said that a few words will suffice here. The *Kai-pien-yao* of the *Kang-hsi* era is scarcely, if at all, inferior to its predecessor of the *Ming* dynasty. The only immediately perceptible difference is that the *pâte* of the former does not show the distinctly red tinge peculiar to *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa* specimens. It is evident that slightly different materials were used in manufacturing the porcelain mass — a conclusion consistent with the recorded facts that the clay of the *Ming* potters was taken from the bed of the river at Ching-tê-chên, and that the supply became exhausted in the second half of the sixteenth century. The *Kang-hsi* keramists had recourse to some other place, and the change is apparent in the nature of their ware. This does not by any means constitute an inferiority. In fineness of *pâte;* in wax-like purity and softness of glaze and body colour; in brilliancy and depth of blue pigment, and in boldness, spirit and skill of decoration, *Kang-hsi* will almost bear comparison with *Hsuan-tê.* Whatever advantage the latter period possesses in the inimitable quality of its blue — and the advantage, though not to be denied, is trifling — may be fairly matched by the superiority of the former's decorative designs and their highly artistic execution. Some of the landscapes, figures and floral subjects on vases of *Kang-hsi Kai-pien-yao* are pictures that any master might be proud to have painted, whether on account of the decorative instinct shown in their subtle distribution, or because of the vigour and feeling with which they are limned.

The collector must not expect to find large, imposing pieces of *Kai-pien-yao.* The choicest specimens are often of tiny dimensions, as might almost be anticipated from the delicate nature of the ware. Little vases, two or three inches high, for holding a single blossom; snuff bottles of even smaller size; vermilion boxes; rice-bowls; cups; plates, and such things, constitute the bulk of procurable examples. Gracefully shaped vases from eight or ten inches to a foot and a half in height may be occasionally found, but they are exceedingly rare, and, if without blemish, command almost prohibitive prices. On smaller specimens of *Kai-pien-yao* the *Kang-hsi* year-mark frequently occurs, but larger pieces seldom have this indication. The clear and pure quality of their blue is the safest and readiest means of distinguishing them from their successors. Further reference will be made to this point by and by.

Exceedingly thin, hard-paste porcelain, decorated with blue under the glaze, was also produced with signal success by the *Kang-hsi* potters. This exquisitely delicate ware, as thin as paper and nearly as translucid as glass, stands on the same plane as the *Kai-pien-yao* from a technical point of view, but is artistically inferior, lacking, as it necessarily does, the dazzling contrast presented by the wax-like white body and brilliant blue decoration of soft-paste porcelain. Chinese connoisseurs, however, set much store by hard-paste blue-and-white "egg-shell," and it unquestionably occupies a high place among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the period. Cups, bowls, plates, and so forth, appear to have been chiefly manufactured. Vases, ewers or fish-bowls of any considerable size scarcely exist for the ordinary collector. The year-mark of the era often occurs on hard-paste egg-shell pieces, but it will be understood from what has been already said, that such a distinction is neither essential nor trustworthy. Deception need not be greatly feared, however, in the case of such specimens. If the decorative design is well executed, the blue of fine, clear but not necessarily deep tone, the glaze lustrous, the biscuit thin, and the general technique plainly excellent, the collector may be confident that he has to do with a genuine example.

Modern potters were not competent to produce successful imitations of work requiring so much skill.

It is remarkable that only in recent years have the merits and beauties of soft-paste blue-and-white porcelain obtained recognition outside China, or even from foreign virtuosi residing in China. Many fine collections of various porcelains have been made by men whose commercial, diplomatic, or consular duties held them in China for a term of years, and whose tastes led them to utilize the golden opportunity that a sojourn in that country afforded two decades ago. But in few, if any, of these collections did the prince of blue-and-white porcelains hold a representative place. Specimens of medium quality were indeed present, but so small was their number and so slight the consideration bestowed on them, that their possessors had evidently acquired them accidentally, and without any real cognisance of their excellence. This singular fact may have been due, in part, to the comparatively high prices that specimens of *Kai-pien-yao* always commanded in the Chinese market. A native collector seldom thought of seeking any other kind of blue-and-white ware. Hard-paste pieces, except of the egg-shell type, had little attraction for him: however fine their colour and rich their decoration, they did not represent really choice porcelains, according to the standards that he applied. But for soft-paste porcelains of high quality and celebrated eras, he was prepared to pay prices that would have seemed quite extravagant to Western collectors in their uninstructed days; and, as a necessary consequence, traffic in such ware was confined to the Chinese themselves. But when closer and more intelligent scrutiny began to be directed to the subject, and when the standards adopted in China itself began to be recognised as technically true at least, soft-paste blue-and-white ware quickly rose to its due place in the esteem of collectors.

In addition to "Hawthorn," *Kai-pien-yao*, and hard-paste "egg-shell," large quantities of ordinary blue-and-white porcelain were manufactured during the *Kang-hsi* era. The general verdict as to these wares is that the grand colour of the blue is always an attractive feature. The *pâte* is fine, the glaze smooth and lustrous, the workmanship skilful; but over and above these recommendations the tone of the blue especially attracts attention. Its clearness, brilliancy, and depth distinguish it from the blue of the rival epoch, *Chien-lung* (1736–1795), and give it a marked advantage over the colour of the *Lung-wang-yao* (1567–1619), though the full, solid tone of the latter is unquestionably imposing. A very little experience will enable the connoisseur to recognise the bright, pure *Kang-hsi* blue from anything of later date, while the only *Ming* specimens large enough and numerous enough to create any confusion, namely, those of the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* workshops, present, on their side, unmistakable features. The *Kang-hsi* decorators took their designs from a very large field. Especially addicted to figure subjects, they loved to depict hunting scenes, war scenes, garden scenes, in all of which Mandarins, braves, dames of high and low degree, and children at play occupied a great part of the space to be decorated. Palm trees and quaintly shaped rocks appear everywhere. Geometrical diapers, and ingenious arabesques, often betraying distinctly Egyptian affinities, and boldly curved scroll patterns constitute another class of motives borrowed chiefly from ancient bronzes. Too frequently the painting itself is weak and mechanical. That it was more likely to assume this character than to display originality and vigour, may be gathered from the records. "Each variety of round vase decorated with blue *sous couverte*," says the *Tao-lu*, is manufactured by hundreds. If the pictures are not identical, great irregularity results. For this reason, the expert who sketches the design does not study the art of laying on the colours; and *per contra*, the man who applies the colours does not learn how to sketch. Thus each employs his hand always on the same object without dividing his attention. Those who sketch and those who colour are separated in the same studio so that their work may be uniform." And what this uniformity of work actually meant in practice will be understood from the account of M. d'Entrecolles: — "The business of painting is divided, in one studio, between a large number of workmen. One's sole duty is to form the first coloured ring seen near the rim of the piece; another traces flowers for yet another to paint. One confines himself to sketching landscapes, another does not go beyond birds and animals." What was gained in celerity by this division of labour was often lost in originality. Yet these *Kang-hsi* porcelains are always redeemed by their fine colour, whether the artistic features of their decoration be good or bad. In many of the better specimens bands of scroll pattern or diapers, incised in the *pâte*, surround the bases and rims, adding appreciably to the decorative effect. In others the blue decoration is confined to medallions, the whole of the rest of the surface being occupied by arabesques in low relief.

Another class of hard-paste porcelain decorated with blue *sous couverte*, numerous and beautiful examples of which were manufactured during the *Kang-hsi* era, is that known to Western collectors as *soufflé*, and called in China *Chui-ching-yao*. The colouring matter was applied by blowing it through a tube covered with gauze. Thus the surface became covered with speckles of colour, more or less minute and close, showing a charming play of light and shade. M. d'Entrecolles describes the process thus:—"The blue is fully prepared. Then a tube is taken, one orifice of which has very fine gauze stretched over it. The end of this tube is lightly dipped in the colouring solution so that the gauze becomes saturated, whereupon the workman blows through the tube against the porcelain, of which the surface becomes covered with little blue specks. This species of ware is dearer and rarer than that not having its colour *soufflé*, because the execution of the process is very difficult if the requisite proportions are preserved." Sometimes the piece received no other decoration than this *soufflé* blue, in which case it ranked as a monochrome, and depended entirely upon the brilliancy and depth of its colour. In other instances floral designs, landscapes, or figure subjects, were sketched in gold upon the surface of the glaze. This addition cannot be called a happy inspiration, especially as the gold, being inperfectly fixed at a low temperature, and sometimes not fired at all, suggested the idea of an accidental adjunct, and very soon disappeared under friction, leaving only unsightly traces of its presence. The fashion had descended from the *Ming* dynasty, for in the imperial requisition of the eighth year of *Chia-ching* (1529) it appears that among the articles required for the palace were: —

> *Large round dishes* of pure blue glaze with dragons in sea-waves, *inside;* a cloud-scroll ground with three lions and dragons, *outside*, painted in gold over the glaze.

Yet another method was to interrupt the *soufflé* surface by medallions containing designs also in blue under the glaze. Very pleasing effects were thus obtained, slightly marred, however, by a want of contrast between the decoration within the medallions and the colour of the surrounding field. A much more artistic style was to employ the *soufflé* blue as a ground for reserved designs in white. To accomplish this the design must have been protected with paper when the colouring matter was blown over the biscuit. The fashion is analogous with that of the "Hawthorn" ware, the only difference being that instead of limiting himself to blossoms and branches of plum, the artist depicted figure subjects, mythical animals and personages, precious emblems, and so forth. Beautiful and striking results were attained.

To this class of decoration belong porcelains covered with *soufflé* or plain blue and having designs or inscriptions faintly picked out in white. Immense care was taken in the execution of such specimens. The plan pursued was to apply the colouring matter uniformly, and afterwards intersperse sketches by removing portions of the blue with a pointed instrument. The effect was exceedingly delicate. Occasionally, while the outer surface of a bowl or libation cup was thus treated, the inner received finely executed diapers, scrolls, and ideographs, incised or in relief. The Ching-tê-chên expert plainly regarded such pieces as *chefs-d'œuvre*. They were manufactured in the *Ming* dynasty as well as in the *Kang-hsi* period, for among the items of the imperial requisition of the *Wan-li* reign the following is found —

> *Tea-dippers* with white flowers on blue ground, and white dragons coiling through the flowers of the four seasons.

At the Ching-tê-chên factories during the *Kang-hsi* and two succeeding eras there was produced a porcelain which may be classed mid-way between the ordinary hard-paste ware and the soft-paste *Kai-pien-yao*. It possesses all the fine qualities of the latter, thinness of biscuit, milky whiteness of glaze, brilliancy of blue colour and artistic delicacy of decorative design. But it is without crackle, and the absence of this feature certainly deprives it of the peculiar wax-like aspect that adds so much to the charms of the *Kai-pien-yao*. This variety of blue-and-white porcelain is not specially distinguished by name in China, but it takes a high place in the esteem of Chinese connoisseurs. The collector recognises it easily by its lightness, thinness and the pure white of its body, this last feature constituting the chief distinction between it and hard-paste egg-shell porcelain.

Undoubtedly the *Kang-hsi* hard-paste porcelains, considered from the point of view of decorative effect, deserve the favour they have found with Western collectors. They belong to a grade of technical and artistic achievement below that of the *Kai-pien-yao*, but they have the practical advantages of being procurable in incomparably greater numbers at less cost and of much more imposing size. Moreover, it appears to be as far beyond the capacity of modern potters to reproduce them as it is to imitate the *Kai-pien-yao* itself. Their magnificent colour, the rich lustre of their glaze, and the thoroughly satisfactory quality of their beauty have thus far remained, and will apparently continue to remain, incomparable. Not infrequently, too, specimens are found which, though not absolutely of egg-shell thinness, approach it so closely as to be scarcely distinguishable. These are keramic *chefs-d'œuvre* of the highest order: even the most fastidious Chinese connoisseur frankly admits their merits. The more solid pieces, too, have a charm of their own: to brightness of effect they add a suggestion of restfulness and purity that raises them very close to the rank of fine monochromes. There can be no doubt that, so far as porcelains are concerned, the ideal objects of virtu are monochromes; the noble reds (peach-bloom, bean-blossom, *sang-de-bœuf*, liquid-dawn, precious-ruby, coral, rouge, jujube, vermilion, and Rose-du-Barry); the strong, soft greens (cucumber-rind, apple-rind, peacock, and *céladon*); the glowing and delicate blues (Mazarin, cerulean of the sky after rain, and kingfisher); the shell-like or solid yellows; the exquisite satin or waxy whites (above all the soft-paste, *Ting-yao*); the transmutation tints and the many other colours at once curious and lovely that bear witness to the Chinese keramist's inventive genius and fertility of resource, constitute a catalogue of masterpieces within the range of which a collector with ample means and wide opportunity may well be content to limit himself. But how many amateurs can afford, how many, even though their resources permit, can hope, to procure any large assemblage of specimens so costly and now so rare? To those not thus blessed by fortune and happy in opportunity there remains an alternative not very much less satisfactory, the collection of blue-and-white. A good specimen of this charming ware never palls upon the taste; acquaintance only develops appreciation of its qualities. As an article of ornamental furniture it is always delightful. The virtuoso who is so fortunate as to be able to decorate a room with blue-and-white and blue-and-white only, has beside him a perpetual source of æsthetic enjoyment. Other porcelains need, as a rule, an appropriate environment; but blue-and-white adapts itself to every companionship, and when its advantages in that respect come to be more generally recognised, an over-mantel or a cabinet of *chinghwa* specimens will probably find a place in every artistically furnished house.

No detailed reference has thus far been made to the subjects chiefly chosen by Chinese potters for the decoration of porcelains. On a vast majority of specimens the dragon (*lung*) figures in some form or other. His shapes are numerous. Sometimes he is found so thoroughly conventionalised as to be almost unrecognisable; sometimes, he assumes an altogether realistic shape, and is limned performing a dance intended to be terrible but usually only grotesque; sometimes he is depicted with skill such as could be inspired only by a belief in his reality. But it must be confessed that there is something distinctly wearisome about this unceasing repetition of a fabulous monster which cannot be rendered picturesque except by methods of representation scarcely possible on porcelain. Yet the Chinese decorator could hardly give less prominence to a monster that occupies such an important place in the traditions and superstitions of his nation. The celestial dragon, guardian and buttress of the dwellings of the deities; the spiritual dragon that makes the wind blow and the rain fall; the terrestrial dragon that shapes the courses of rivers and brooks; the treasure dragon that keeps watch over the precious things invisible to human eyes; the holy dragon that protects the Buddhist faith; the majestic dragon that appears on the imperial ensign and serves as a synonym for the occupant of the throne — all these are forms in which the fabulous snake presents himself to Chinese imagination, and on porcelains destined for official use his introduction into some part of the decorative design becomes almost a necessary tribute to his supernatural ubiquity. It must be noted, however, that though the iteration of the dragon is a defect in Chinese keramic decoration, some of the very choicest specimens of blue-and-white porcelain carry this design, especially vermilion boxes and pen-washers of soft-paste ware (*kai-pien-yao*) upon which the potter has evidently lavished all the resources of his technique. The dragon is also incised in the paste of egg-shell porcelains of unsurpassable quality, and is modelled in relief upon grand *céladons* and enamelled wares of the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* eras.

The phœnix (*Fêng*) stands next to the dragon in frequency of use as a decorative subject. It is one of the Four Supernatural Creatures, the others being the dragon, the *Ky-lin* (unicorn) and the tortoise (*kwei*). Tradition assigns to the phœnix a pheasant's head, a swallow's bill, a tortoise's neck, and the outward semblance of a dragon. But these characteristics are seldom apparent in its ordinary delineations. It is frequently employed with successful decorative effect, one of its happiest shapes being seen when it is disposed circularly so as to form a medallion. But the Chinese have not shown as much taste as the Japanese in adapting the phœnix to decorative purposes. In the hands of the latter it is often idealised into a creation full of grace and symmetry; in those of the former, it is seldom more than a strange-looking bird. The decorator's fondness for it is due in some degree to superstition, for it is regarded as an emblem of national prosperity and the herald of a beneficent reign.

The tortoise (*kwei*), though occurring with tolerable frequency in the decoration of blue-and-white porcelains can scarcely be called a favourite design as compared with the dragon and phœnix. It is, however, the chief emblem of longevity, and as such occupies a place of importance in the painter's range of subjects.

The *K'i-lin*, *Ky-lin*, or fabulous unicorn, is, like the phœnix, a composite animal with the body of a stag and the bushy tail of an ox. It is generally depicted with flames playing round its shoulders and clouds supporting it, for as the divinest of animals, the emblem of perfect good, it is supposed to tread so lightly that the air is insensible of its foot-prints and no living creature, however fragile, is crushed by its hoofs.

The tiger (*hu*), least commonly used of the four fabulous animals for decorative purposes, is invariably depicted with very little realistic success. When most conventionalised it is almost tolerable, but as a rule the Chinese keramic artist shows conspicuous want of skill in delineating this "King of Beasts" and "Type of Wisdom." Sometimes it is shown as the companion of the Taoist Rishi Kü Ling-jin; sometimes as the steed of Tsai Lwan, or Wên Siao, one of the Four Sleepers.

The lion of the keramic decorator is usually depicted with an immense mane, often carefully plaited, and sometimes with a bushy tail. He bears little resemblance to the gaunt, fierce animal of the jungle, but is a half playful, half ferocious beast, sporting with a ball which represents the sacred gem, or even associated with peony flowers.

Used generally for purposes of subordinate decoration, there are numerous symbols which at first sight suggest mere fanciful devices, but have, in truth, their own special meaning. These are well described by Mr. A. W. Franks, F.R.S., from information furnished by Dr. Bushell, of the British Legation in Peking, and that most accurate writer's classification is here followed.

The Ordinary Symbols are known in China as "*Pa-pao*," or the eight precious things. Eight is a favourite number with the Chinese in the grouping of objects that have religious affinities, doubtless because the "mystic trigrams," which constitute the alphabet of Chinese astrologers and philosophers, are eight in number. The connection of the "*Pa-pao*" with any particular religion has not, however, been traced. These eight symbols are as follow:—

1.—An oblate spherical object, represented sometimes white and sometimes yellow, with a ribbon entwined around it. This represents a pearl (*chin*), and is often used as a mark, either the object itself or the ideograph *chin* being depicted. It is the gem shown in the claws of dragons or as the object which they seek to grasp, and occasionally flame-like rays of effulgence issue from it.

2. — A circular object enclosing a square. This has been identified as the *Kwei*, or honorary tablet for officials, but there appears to be little doubt that it was originally a representation of the Chinese "cash," a small copper coin having a square hole through which a string is passed. The decorative purpose of this symbol is to typify riches.

3. — A lozenge-shaped object having fillets threaded through it. This also is supposed to represent the *Kwei*, or stone of honour for officials. Two of such lozenges, with overlapping ends, form the dual symbol *fang-shang*.

4. — A lozenge-shaped object having a compartment above. This is supposed to be a variety of No. 3.

5. — An object resembling a mason's square, being the *king*, a sonorous stone, or bronze plate, used like a bell in China. An ideograph having the same sound (*king*) signifies "goodness," "prosperity," "fortune," and the instrument is consequently depicted instead of the ideograph, being carved in that sense on the ends of rafters and on articles of furniture.

6. — Two oblong objects placed close together, and supposed to represent books; hence symbols of literature, which the Chinese hold in highest esteem.

7. — A pair of curved objects, representing rhinoceros horns (*se-keo*).

8. — A leaf, of variable form; probably a leaf of the artemisia (*ai-yeh*), which is an emblem of good augury.

These symbols are sometimes seen carried by a procession of fantastic figures, possibly tribute-bearers from the tribes of the *Man*, or southern barbarians. They are also used as marks, and "may generally be distinguished from other ornaments by ribbons or fillets entwined about them."

The Buddhist Symbols are called *Pa-chi-siung*, or the eight lucky emblems of Buddhism. "They are carved in wood or moulded in clay, and offered on the altar of every Chinese Buddhist temple, as well as repeated *ad infinitum* in architectural decoration. They are derived from India."

9. — A bell (*chung*). This is often replaced by the *lun* or *chakra*, the wheel of the law.

10. — An univalve shell (*lo*), the chank-shell of the Buddhists. It is carried by masters of ships to insure a prosperous voyage.

11. — A State umbrella (*san*), supposed to represent the *Wan-min-san*, or "umbrella of ten thousand people," "which is presented to a Mandarin on his leaving his district, as a token of the purity of his administration."

12. — A canopy (*kae*).

13. — The lotus flower (*hwa*). This is the sacred blossom of the Buddhists. It takes several forms, varying from the original in proportion to the painter's want of skill.

14. — A sacred urn (*kwan*).

15. — Two fishes (*yu*) united by fillets. This is supposed to "allude to domestic felicity, because a fresh-water fish like a perch is said to go about in pairs, always faithful to each other." Two fishes, not necessarily united by a fillet, are the oldest of all ornaments found on porcelain. They occur frequently in relief, or incised, upon plates and bowls of *Sung céladon*.

16. — The angular knot, the intestines (*chang*), used as an emblem of longevity.

Some other common symbolical devices are: —

17. —A circularly arranged seal character for *sho*, longevity. This ideograph has no less than a hundred different forms, and not infrequently a vase or a cup has for sole decoration different forms of the ideograph. It occurs in all kinds of combinations, and shares with the ideograph *fuh* ("felicity"), of which also there are many forms, the distinction of figuring most frequently in keramic decoration.

18. — A bat (*fuh*). The word "fuh," a bat, has exactly the same sound — though of course its ideograph is different — as *fuh*, felicity. Hence a delineation of a bat has come

to be commonly used as a synonym for "felicity." Occasionally five bats are found in combination. They symbolise the five blessings, namely, longevity, riches, peace, love of virtue, and a happy death.

19. — The eight trigrams, known as the *Pa-kwa.* "They consist of combinations of broken and entire lines, each differently placed. The entire lines represent the male, strong, or celestial element in nature, and the broken, the female, weak, or terrestrial. Each group has its own name, and even the dishes at a feast are arranged in accordance with these diagrams. They are said to have been first published by Fuh-hi, the legendary founder of the Chinese polity, who is stated to have lived B.C. 3852 to 2738, and to whom they were revealed by a dragon horse. By them the Chinese philosophers attempted to explain all the secrets of nature and of being. The diagram shows the oldest arrangement, in which they are supposed to be connected with the points of the compass, the north and south being, however, reversed, according to the Chinese system (*i.e.*, the south represented by three entire lines, the north by three broken). "The circular figure in the centre is the mystical device, the *Yang* and *Yin*, the male and female elements of nature. This device is not infrequently employed as an ornament in China."

Among the figures depicted on porcelain none are so common as the *Pa Sien*, or Eight Immortals, legendary beings of the Taoist sect, said to have lived at various times and attained immortality. They are found sometimes in combination — especially where the decoration consists of red and blue *sous couverte*, the *Pa Sien* being then depicted in blue among a diaper of red waves — and sometimes they are shown as separate figures, of which there are two sets, one standing the other seated. In other cases they are represented riding upon various animals among the waves of the sea. Each figure has an emblem of its own, and occasionally the emblem, or symbol, occurs alone as a device. Many other decorative devices are employed typifying, for the most part, longevity. "The greatest desire of a Chinaman is long life," writes Mr. Franks, "which prolongs his enjoyment of this world's goods, and ensures his receiving the respect paid to old age in a country governed by the maxims of Confucius. Longevity is therefore the first and greatest of the *Wu Fuh*, or Five Blessings. The Taoists, or followers of Lao Tsze, carried this still farther, spending their time, like the mediæval alchemists, in the search after the elixir of immortality. Hence, as might be expected, the emblems of longevity occur very frequently on porcelain, and take a great variety of forms, all symbolising good wishes to the possessors. It may be useful, therefore, to describe these emblems briefly.

"One of the commonest of the seal characters with which porcelain is decorated is the word *sho*, 'longevity' (already spoken of) of which the varieties are endless. A set of a hundred varieties is seen on a roll in the British Museum; another set is given in Hooper and Phillips Manual of Marks." The same ideograph is also found as a mark.

The Taotist god of longevity — supposed to be Lao-tze himself — is often shown on porcelain. He appears in the form of an old man in the garb of a scholar of ancient times, of almost dwarfish stature, with an elongated bald head, holding a sceptre of longevity, sometimes riding on a stork or tortoise, and sometimes resting his hand on a deer. A Japanese work (*E-hon Koji-dan*), published in 1720, speaks of him as the Ancient of the South Pole Star, the luminary that presides over human life, and by its appearance heralds tranquillity to the world. The story told in support of this identification is thus translated in Anderson's British Museum catalogue: — "In the period *Yuan-Yu* (1086–1094 A.D.) there lived an old man in the capital of China. He was only three feet high, and of this measure his head formed the moity. Every day he went into the city and foretold the future to the people. With the proceeds of his prophetic trade he bought *saké*, and when he had drunk freely he would strike his head and say, 'I am a sage, and can bestow the gift of long life.' A certain man having seen him, painted his portrait, and presented it to the Emperor, who summoned the strange being to the palace, and after regaling him with *saké*, asked how many were the years he numbered. He made no reply, but told many stories of past ages, and suddenly vanished, no one knew whither. On the following morning it was announced that the light of the South Pole Star had, on the previous evening, touched the Imperial palace. The Emperor then comprehended that the old man was an incarnation of the Star of Longevity, and preserved his portrait with the deepest veneration. The pictures drawn at the present day are derived from this, but in late years representations of the deer, crane, and tortoise, animals emblematic of long life, have been placed by the side of the sage." Chinese modern literature identifies the old man as Tung Wang-kung, one of the first beings evolved from chaos by the spontaneous volition of the primordial principle, and as the husband of the fairy Si Wang-mu (Japanese Sei-ô-bô), who usually appears in the form of a richly dressed female with a royal tiara, standing on a cloud and accompanied by two girl attendants, one of whom holds a dish of peaches, the other a processional or ceremonial fan. The Rishi Tung Wang-Kung is also frequently attended by two boys, one of whom carries a peach, the other bears two rolls suspended from a long staff.

Reference has already been made to the *Ki'lin* or Ky-lin, which is at once a symbol of good government and of longevity, its term of life being supposed to extend to a thousand years. Mr. Franks notes that most of the animals commonly but erroneously called *Ky-lin* are other monsters, especially the fabulous lion of Korea, the true Ki-lin having the body and hoofs of a deer, the tail of a bull, and a single horn on his forehead.

The deer (*luh*) is also an emblem of longevity. A white stag frequently accompanies the God of Longevity, as noted above. It sometimes carries in its mouth another emblem, the fungus (to be spoken of presently). A deer, however, is also used as a symbol of official emolument or prosperity, having the same sound as the word for the latter (*luh*).

The hare (*tu*) is sacred to the moon, where the Taoists believe it to live, pounding the drugs that form the elixir of life. It is stated to live a thousand years, and to become white when it has reached the first five centuries. The hare, often miscalled a rabbit, occurs on porcelain both as decoration and as a mark.

The fox (*hu*) is considered a very mysterious animal. It is said to attain the same age as the hare, when it is admitted to the heavens and becomes the "celestial fox." It is used, but not frequently, in the decoration of porcelain as an emblem of longevity.

The tortoise (*kwei*) was also regarded as a supernatural animal and its shell was used in divination.

The tortoise with a hairy tail appears as an attendant on the God of Old Age, and is used as an emblem of longevity. A Chinese phrase *kwei ho tung chun* signifies, "May your days be as long as those of the tortoise and the crane."

The crane (*ho*) is among the commonest emblems of longevity. Tradition assigns to it a fabulous age, and says that for six hundred years it requires no sustenance but water, and that after two thousand years it turns black. The Chinese keramic artist has never been as happy as the Japanese in his use of the crane for decorative purposes, but it nevertheless appears sometimes on his wares in a sufficiently pleasing form. According to some expounders of Chinese mythical zoölogy the black crane is a special species, there being in all four varieties — the black, the yellow, the white, and the blue. Its association with the God of Longevity has already been mentioned. It also appears as the aërial steed of Wang Tsz'kiao, and as the companion of the poet Lin Hwa-ching.

"Among plants there are three, which, though not all strictly speaking emblems of longevity, are closely connected with it; these are the pine, bamboo and plum. The Chinese say 'the Pine, Bamboo and Plum are like three friends, because they keep green in cold weather.' The pine (*sung*) is a very common emblem," and is constantly found in keramic decoration. "Its sap was said to turn into amber when the tree was a thousand years old. The bamboo (*chuh*) is another emblem, owing probably to its durability. Its elegant form causes it to be frequently traced on works of art. The plum tree (*mei*), though not properly an emblem of longevity, is indirectly connected with it, as the philosopher Lao Tsze, the founder of the Taoist sect, is said to have been born under a plum tree.

The peach (*tao*) is a symbol of marriage but also of longevity. Great virtues were attributed to the peach, especially that which grew near the palace of Si Wang Mu, Queen of the Genii, where the fruit ripened only once in three thousand years.

The gourd (*hu-lu*) is also an emblem of longevity, and being largely used as a wine-bottle, it possesses another significance in decorative designs. It does not, however, occur frequently.

"Of all plants the most common emblem of longevity is the fungus (*chi* or *ling-chi*)." Its durability when dried is doubtless the origin of the significance attached to it. The particular fungus depicted in decorations is believed to be the *Polyporus lucidus*, which grows at the roots of trees. Large specimens of it, or imitations carved in wood and gilt, are preserved in temples, and it frequently occurs in pictures of Lao Tzse and the other Immortals, or in the mouth of deer. Sometimes it is accompanied by grass-like leaves representing the actual grass among which it grows, and which occasionally forces its way through the fungus while the latter is soft. The fungus is used not infrequently as a mark.

The Buddhist sceptre (*jo-i*) which is presented at marriages and to friends as an emblem of good luck, often enters into decorative designs, and is always shown in the hands of the God of Longevity. It is made of a great variety of materials, such as jade, enamelled metal, carved lacquer, porcelain, and so forth.

It will, of course, be understood that the objects mentioned above are not restricted to the decoration of blue-and-white porcelain. They occur with equal frequency on specimens of *famille verte* and *famille rose.* Indeed no device is commoner on fine porcelains of the last named variety than a branch of peach tree with fruit, the leaves executed in translucid green enamel, and the fruit in the broken tints and half tones peculiar to the *famille rose.* Strawberries are almost as often found on fine specimens of this family, but they are chosen solely on account of their suitability to the palette of the *famille rose* painter, and not because of any emblematic significance attaching to them.

As to blue-and-white of the *pâte tendre* class, the subjects affected above all others by decorators — the ubiquitous dragon excepted — is the pomegranate tree. Why this should be the case, no explanation is forthcoming, other than the obvious fact that the branches and fruit lend themselves readily to graceful composition and distribution over the surface. Landscapes too are very frequently depicted, their details finished with the utmost care, and some of them showing a fine artistic sense. Garden scenes are also found, not uncommonly having a more or less close affinity with the familiar old willow pattern. Figure subjects, however, are comparatively rare on soft-paste porcelains, with the exception of snuff-bottles. On the whole, the decorators of this choice ware seem to have been guided chiefly by canons of chastity and refinement, and to have avoided the incongruity of attempting to produce dazzling effects on a surface that lent itself best to delicate and soft subjects.

When speaking of the choicest wares of the *Ming* dynasty, allusion was made to decoration with red *sous couverte*, the most celebrated examples of which were the *Hung-yu-pa-pei*, or "red-fish-stemmed cups" of the *Hsuan-tê* era, and it was there stated that without doubt the same style of decoration continued to be produced equally skilfully on porcelains of later dates. In all ages connoisseurs have had their special favourites. It is easy to find Chinese dilettanti who still maintain that nothing comparable with the *Hung-yu-pa-pei* in brilliancy and depth of red and snow-like purity of white, ever emanated from any workshop after the *Hsuan-tê* era. But unless that preference be based on points not perceptible to every-day eyes, it may safely be said that the experts of *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* did not fall behind those of *Hsuan-tê* in this branch. They — that is to say, the potters of the golden age of the *Tsing* dynasty — called red *sous couverte Yu-li-hung* a term intended to convey the idea of red seen floating in a limpid medium. They employed the same colouring matter — silicate of copper — as that used by their *Ming* predecessors, and they applied it much in the same manner as that followed in painting with cobaltiferous manganese. The temperature of development in the kiln was also the same in the case of blue and red, as is proved by the fact that they are found occurring together in perfect tones upon the same piece. Evidently, however, great difficulty attended the production of fine *Yu-li hung*, for an exceedingly high value has always been put upon it by Chinese connoisseurs. The points of excellence are the quality and tone of the red — which must be at once brilliant like a ruby, and soft as velvet — the purity of the white and the lustre of the glaze. Many varieties of red are found on porcelains thus decorated, *sang de bœuf*, ruby, bean-blossom, reddish brown, liver colour and maroon. It is maintained, however, by Chinese collectors — to whose verdict the foreign connoisseur must, of course, bow in such matters — that the potter's highest aim was to produce a colour combining brilliancy and strength with softness and liquidity. According to this canon, what the amateur has to look for is the red of fresh blood or of a ripe cherry, and his standard may be that the purer and more dazzling the tone, the choicer the specimen. In old-time descriptions of such decoration sharp definition of the red design's contours is spoken of as a special *tour de force*, the sudden juxtaposition of the snow-white ground tending to give salience and emphasis to the decoration. But in some examples highly prized and plainly deserving the esteem in which they are held, a slight clouding of red appears at the edges and in the interstices of the design, and the result is soft and charming. It need scarcely be said that no variety of this ware is choicer than that in which the red is of the bean-blossom (or "peach-blow") type. Moreover, although the colour does not belong to any of the very rarest types — fresh-blood, ruby, ripe-cherry, or peach-bloom — but falls below them in strength and brilliancy, the specimen may still have claims to a prominent place in any collection. A distinctly impure muddy red alone condemns the ware. In the great majority of really choice examples the red shows dappling and spotting with transparent green, varying from emerald to the colour of powdered tea-leaf (*chamo*). This feature is considered of the highest importance. It establishes an affinity between the *Yu-li-hung* and the celebrated *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* ("peach-bloom").

As to red *sous couverte* found in combination with blue, sometimes the one colour predominates, sometimes the other. Many of the specimens in this class are of remarkable beauty and value, especially those of the *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* eras, in which the grand blue, delicate, pure and brilliant, characteristic of those epochs, consorts most effectively with the red. In these examples also the presence of green spots or dapples, floating in the red field, constitutes a mark of special choiceness, and frequently helps to give point to the decorative design. Favourite subjects with the decorator were the Eight Taoist Immortals in blue walking on red waves; red flowers suspended among blue scrolls; blue dragons among red clouds or waves; white dragons, with finely engraved scales, among red waves, pomegranate trees, their branches and leaves in blue and their fruit in red, and floral or leaf scrolls in red divided by blue bands. Large and imposing specimens decorated with the two colours under the glaze are occasionally found, but where red alone is employed the choicest examples are generally small. Finally it may be noted that many specimens of these porcelains carry the six-ideograph mark (*Ta-tsing Kang-hsi nien chih*, or *Ta-tsing Yung-ching nien chih*) in blue *sous couverte*. The reader should perhaps be reminded that no reference is here made to over-glaze decoration in red combined with blue *sous couverte*. That belongs to an entirely different category.

The next year-period after *Kang-hsi* was *Yung-*

ching, which lasted only thirteen years (1723–1736). So far as concerns blue-and-white porcelain, nothing need be said of this era except that the manufacture of all the varieties of the preceding reign was continued with undiminished success. The Ching-tê-chên factories were then under the direction of Nien, of whom the *Tao-lu* records that he himself selected materials for the imperial porcelains and personally supervised the processes of the potters. Pieces thus produced were said to be "of a high degree of fineness and elegance," which verdict is unquestionably endorsed by the experience of modern collectors, to whom everything bearing the *Yung-ching* mark — *Ta-Tsing Yung-ching nien chi* — is of beauty and value. Nien, or Nien-Kung (the Sieur Nien) as he is commonly called, was unquestionably an artist of conspicuous ability. It will be seen by and by that under his guidance the experts of Ching-tê-chên manufactured monochromatic and polychromatic glazes of great variety and remarkable quality, and that delicate processes of enamel decoration (over the glaze) were also carried to a high degree of excellence. The wares of his era were called *Nien-yao*. Twice a month quantities of them used to be forwarded to Peking for imperial use, and at frequent intervals the Emperor was solicited to convey his wishes to the factories. Thus stimulated the keramic art could scarcely fail to flourish. But it added nothing to the catalogue of choice productions in respect of decoration *sous couverte*.

In the absence of year-marks the connoisseur will find it almost impossible to distinguish between *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* specimens of the classes now under consideration. The quality of the *pâte* is identical, the tones of the *sous-couverte* colours are similar, and the fashions of decoration differ only in one respect, namely, that figure subjects were more affected by the experts of the former era.

The *Chien-lung* period (1736-1795), which followed that of *Yung-ching*, was perhaps the most prolific of all Chinese epochs, if considered with respect to the number of specimens it has furnished to Western collections. The author of the *Tao-lu* speaks of the era with great enthusiasm, and his eulogies were not exaggerated. The imperial factories were controlled by Tang, commonly called Tang-Kung (the Sieur Tang), and the wares manufactured under his direction are known as *Tang-yao*. This expert really belongs to the *Yung-ching* as well as to the *Chien-lung* era. He came to Ching-tê-chên in 1727, and served, apparently, as assistant-superintendent under Nien, who is mentioned above. But at the commencement of Chien-lung's reign Nien was employed elsewhere on duties of a different character, which occupied him until 1743, when he returned to Kiukiang and became joint superintendent of the potteries with Tang. These two masters carried the keramic art of China to its zenith. Of Tang it is recorded:—"He employed the greatest care in choosing materials, and all the vases manufactured under his direction were consequently of the most perfect delicacy, brilliancy, and purity. He could also imitate the most celebrated antique wares, never failing to obtain the same degree of elegance and beauty as his originals. He further imitated all varieties of most prized glazes, reproducing them with rare skill. The perfection of his porcelains left nothing to be desired. . . . In his day the productions of the imperial factory attained their highest point of excellence. Tang was especially ordered by the Emperor to design plaques representing the various processes of porcelain manufacture, and to accompany them by detailed explanations. The result was twenty-two plaques, in connection with which a celebrated Chinese author wrote of Tang:—'Alone he deliberated on the flower and the fruit (that is to say, on the brilliant and solid qualities of porcelain), and his individual genius supplied all the resources he required. He renewed the manufacture, long interrupted, of jars decorated with dragons (*i.e.* monster vases for gold fish) and wares of *Chün* (*vide Chün-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty) and revived the processes of ancient experts.'" All these eulogies, though well merited on the whole, must be taken with reserve so far as regards blue-and-white porcelain. Speaking technically, the *Chien-lung* potters were not less expert than those of *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* in any direction. Their *pâtes* were just as fine and hard, their glazes as brilliant and their decorative designs as happy. They continued to manufacture the delicate and beautiful *Kai-pien-yao* and hard-paste egg-shell with unsurpassed skill. Yet in one important respect their blue-and-white ware showed inferiority. The quality of the blue was not so pure. Whether a less choice mineral was used or whether the processes of preparing it—and this hypothesis seems scarcely tenable—had deteriorated, there can be little doubt that the *Chien-lung* blue stands almost in the same relation towards the *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* colour as that occupied by the *Wan-li* blue of the *Ming* dynasty in comparison with its predecessors of the *Hsuan-tê* and *Chia-ching* eras. The *Chien-lung* potters evidently appreciated this. For instead of relying entirely on brilliancy and intensity of colour, they tried to heighten the effect of their blues by stippling. In many cases the stippled portions assumed a metallic appearance under the action of heat; in others they showed merely as spots of intenser colour. Strength and density were thus obtained at some cost of depth and brilliancy. Opinions will probably differ as to this verdict. It is conceivable that some connoisseurs may see evidences of high artistic instinct in the deep, intense tones of the *Chien-lung* ware. Certain it is that many grand pieces were manufactured, imposing in size, decorated with admirable care and well directed choice of motive, and altogether highly satisfactory for ornamental purposes.

It is not difficult to distinguish between the blue-and-white porcelains of *Chien-lung* and those of *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching*. The stippled or spotted appearance of the colour on specimens of the first-named period, whether a beauty or a blemish, is an easily identified feature. The mark of the era is *Ta-Tsing Chien-lung nien chi.*

The *Chien-lung* potters produced all the other varieties of decoration under the glaze enumerated in the above notice of the *Kang-hsi* era. No further reference is necessary here.

The succeeding eras of the present (*Tsing*) dynasty may be briefly dismissed. They differ from each other only in degrees of decadence. During the *Chia-tsing* epoch (1796–1821), which immediately followed that of *Chien-lung*, the potteries at Ching-tê-chên still sustained something of their former reputation. Many pieces dating from that era show beauty and technical excellence. But the art had taken a distinctly downward tendency, which became more and more marked in the next period, *Taou-kwang* (1821–1851). The porcelains of the latter, with few exceptions, are comparatively coarse and meritless. The impure colour of their blue decoration accords well with their faulty technique. This unsatisfactory state of affairs culminated in 1852, during the *Hien-fung* epoch (1851–1862), when the factories at Ching-tê-chên were destroyed in the Taeping rebellion. They were subsequently restored, and are at present tolerably active. But it is difficult to trace any affinity between the wares now produced and their admirable predecessors of the *Chien-lung* and *Kang-hsi* periods. Doubtless the decadence which commenced during the reign of Chia-tsing is to be attributed to the troubled state of the empire. In China the prosperity of the keramic industry appears to have been practically dependent upon imperial patronage. Under the *Sung*, *Yuan*, and *Ming* dynasties alike intervals of difficulty and disturbance preceding the downfall of the reigning house were synchronous with a decay of the potter's art. The analogy holds for the *Tsing* dynasty also. When Chien-lung's successor ascended the throne, he found the empire at the zenith of its power and renown. Elements of disturbance, though always existing, had been successfully held in check by the clear judgment and iron will of the great ruler. They speedily eluded the feeble control of Chia-tsing. Before he had been half a dozen years in power, the treason of secret societies was already becoming formidable. In 1803 he achieved the notoriety of barely escaping from a murderous at-tack in the public streets of Peking. In 1800 the first edict prohibiting foreign opium was issued. To students of history these two events recall the commencement of a long period — more than sixty years — during which China had little rest from internal or external complications. Not only her art excellence, but even the ability that inspired it, seems to have disappeared. Nor is there, so far as can be discerned, much chance of a genuine renaissance. Connoisseurs and men of taste generally will not look at wares belonging to an epoch more recent than the eighteenth century. There is practically nothing except the demand of the foreign market to encourage modern effort. Did Chinese annals contain any instance of the keramic industry recovering its vitality during the same dynasty that witnessed its decay, the outlook might be less unpromising. But there is no such precedent. It appears as though any sensible improvement must be preceded by one of two events — the comparative probability of which is difficult to estimate — a change of dynasty or an intelligent revival of official patronage on something like the ancient scale of magnificence. Whatever stimulus the export trade might have afforded, has been largely diminished by Japan's competition. Her manufacturers, in addition to rapid rejuvenescence of technical skill, show adaptability that ought to secure for their wares the permanent favour, if not the ultimate monopoly, of the Western market.

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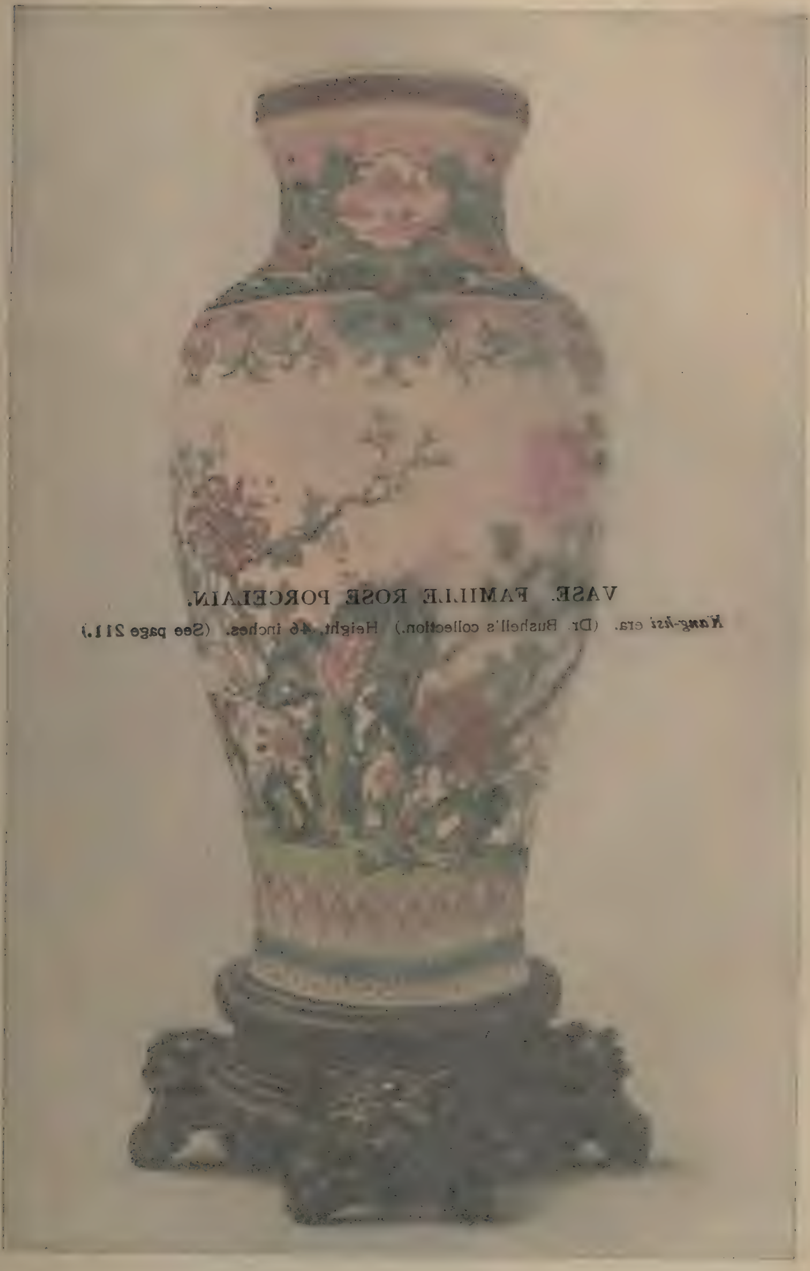

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VASE. FAMILLE ROSE PORCELAIN.
Kang-hsi era. (Dr. Bushell's collection.) Height, 46 inches. (See page 211.)

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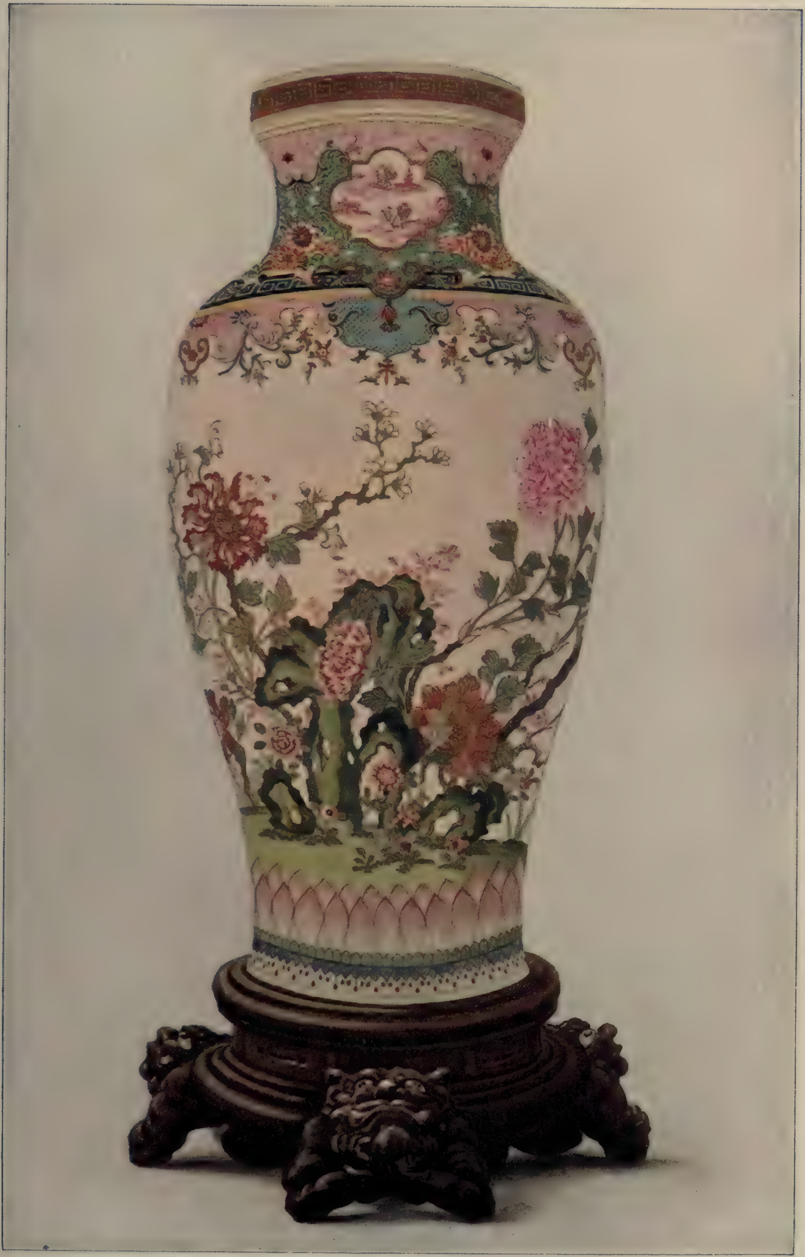

to the fact that the porcelain originally came to Japan from Canton, and was therefore supposed to be the product of factories in or near that city. But the ware had nothing to do with either Nankin or Canton. It was manufactured at Ching-tê-chên, not in the imperial factories, however, but in those of the people. Its special appellation in the West and in Japan must not be taken as indicating radical dissimilarity from ordinary blue-and-white porcelains. The difference is merely an affair of quality. The *pâte*, though exceptionally thin, does not suggest the idea of a fine manufacture; the glaze is vitreous rather than lustrous, and has no claim to solidity; the decoration, though elaborate and profuse, is of the mechanical type, and the blue, if not impure, is thin and shallow. In the case of much of this "Nankin" ware the subjects chosen by the decorators were evidently influenced by European suggestion. Some of the designs closely resemble the formal floral scrolls of Delft and Sèvres, and others display distinctly Indian or Persian features. The disposition of the potter to construct pieces of polygonal section and to break the surface by fluting or convex panels, seems also a distinct reflection of foreign fashions. It is not likely that orders for blue-and-white porcelain were often given by European merchants in China during the last century. Enamelled wares would rather have been chosen. But orders for the latter would of course have been executed at the people's factories, not at those of the Emperor, and the makers of blue-and-white porcelain may thus have been indirectly inspired. There is no doubt, too, that during the reign of Kang-hsi when the propagandists of Christianity possessed great influence and won many converts in China, European designs were copied at Ching-tê-chên and European tastes consulted. Evidences of this tendency will be furnished later on.

The year-marks upon this so-called "Nankin" blue-and-white do not differ from those on finer varieties of porcelain, except that the Seal Character was seldom if ever used by the makers of the former.

Chapter VII

PORCELAIN DECORATED OVER THE GLAZE

PORCELAIN decorated with vitrifiable enamels of various colours over the glaze has always been a favourite variety with European collectors. Ware of this class naturally attracts attention for the sake of its brilliant appearance. But among all the keramic productions of China it has been most subjected to foreign influences. As in Japan porcelains loaded with ornament were largely manufactured at Arita expressly for purposes of exportation, so in China the potters of Ching-tê-chên departed from their own canons to meet the taste of European dealers and clients. Thus, among wares of the *Kang-hsi* era (1662–1722), one variety is said to have been decorated "according to a recent conception" with enamels which were used to depict landscapes, figures, floral subjects, birds, and animals "in the European fashion." It will presently be seen that the earliest, and by Chinese connoisseurs the most esteemed, fashions of enamel decoration were comparatively simple, and that the subsequent demands of the export trade had probably much to do with those elaborate and highly ornate styles empirically distinguished by French amateurs as *Famille Chrysanthémo-pæonienne*, *Famille Verte*, and *Famille Rose*. The standard formerly set up for themselves by English amateurs may be gathered from a passage in the recent writings of Mr. A. W. Franks, of the British Museum. "In England," he says, "till lately, so little was blue-and-white porcelain esteemed, that innumerable specimens, including even those of high quality, were hopelessly spoiled by being daubed over with green, red, and gold (unfortunately burnt in), in order to render them saleable. The majority of English collectors, in short, had only one conception of Chinese porcelain. They regarded it as ware brightly painted in many colours, and to be esteemed chiefly for purposes of decorative furniture. Fortunately the error of such an idea has been recognised. But the tendency at present is to run to the opposite extreme. Monochromatic and blue-and-white wares are placed on an unreasonable eminence as compared with specimens of the enamelled style, and it is no longer admitted, as it should be, that to the latter class belong some of the most beautiful and remarkable efforts of Chinese keramic art.

Decoration by means of vitrifiable enamels and pigments over the glaze seems to have had its origin under the *Yuan* dynasty (1260–1361). But, like many other points in the history of the art, this also is wrapped in obscurity. Chinese annals give no trustworthy information on the subject. Probably their silence is attributable to the comparatively worthless character of early essays in the style. Their phraseology, too, is unhappily loose. Thus the *Tao-lu*, referring to ware made in the opening years of the *Yuan* dynasty at Liu-ch'wen, near Foochow, says that some of the pieces had "flowers rudely painted." In this vague statement connoisseurs have been disposed to find evidence of the origin of decoration over the glaze, but their inference, whether correct or not, is evidently unwarranted. The Chinese themselves do not affect to pronounce a decided verdict. It has never been their habit to attach much importance to historical specimens of a ware. They did not value it until its qualities, technical or artistic, became really attractive, and from this point of view they are unanimous in attributing the first noteworthy use of vitrifiable enamels to the early eras of the *Ming* dynasty. Japanese traditions give some aid. Highly prized by the Tea Clubs of Japan is a stone-ware of medium quality, decorated with diapers and conventional flowers in red and gold with green in a subordinate rôle. The designs are of an archaic character, and the method of applying the pigments and enamels indicates imperfect technique. The white body-glaze, on the contrary, is lustrous, of fine texture, and in choice specimens possesses an ivory tint of much beauty and softness. Such ware is precisely what the *Yuan* potters would have produced on the hypothesis that, despite their highly developed skill in the manipulation of glazing materials, they were still inexperienced in the application of vitrifiable enamels. By Japanese connoisseurs the ware is unanimously ascribed to the *Yuan* dynasty. They call it *Gosu Aka-e*, or "red-picture *Gosu*." This word *Gosu* is written with ideographs which in China would be read *Wu-shuan*, a name identifiable as that of an ancient division — the most easterly — of the province of Chêkiang. Now it is known that Hang-chow, in Chêkiang, was one of the principal starting points of China's export trade during the *Sung* and *Yuan* dynasties, and that at Ch'üah-chou-fu, in the neighbouring province of Fuhkien, a steady trade was carried on by Japanese junks. It is known also that the province of Chêkiang contained several important potteries, and that the celebrated *Kuan-yao* and *Lung-chuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty were manufactured there. Japanese experts, however, do not assert that the *Gosu Aka-e* was a product of Chêkiang. They profess no knowledge about its *provenance*, merely claiming that it came to them from the place by the name of which they designate it. On the whole the student may perhaps accept their testimony, and regard the *Gosu Aka-e* as the earliest representative of Chinese ware decorated with vitrifiable enamels. Several specimens are still carefully preserved and highly esteemed by Japanese *virtuosi*. They consist chiefly of bowls, plates, or small boxes, the last originally intended to contain vermilion, but used in Japan as incense-holders. Red — as the name *Aka-e* denotes — is the dominant colour of the decoration. With it is associated, in small quantities, a green enamel, brilliant but not very pure, and the designs are usually picked out with gold of rich, leaf-like character. The ware derives its value chiefly from historical considerations, and is not accorded any appreciation by Chinese connoisseurs.

During the first half century (1368–1400) of the *Ming* dynasty no appreciable progress took place in this branch of the art. But in the *Yung-lo* era (1403–1424) a new departure was made. Red came to be used as a body colour on which were laid elaborate scroll patterns or formal designs in gold. This beautiful style of decoration, though it cannot have failed to obtain favour at the time, did not rank high in the estimation of Chinese connoisseurs. No specimen of it is given in the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang.

Probably it failed to attract attention, being comparatively easy to manufacture and not belonging to the category of "delicate" wares. In the neighbouring empire of Japan, however, it was esteemed. The celebrated factories at Kutani took it as a model, and the greatest keramist of Kyôtô, Zengoro Hozen, not only owed much of his fame to imitations of the ware and to developments suggested by it, but also derived his artist name, Eiraku (Chinese *Yung-lo*), from the period of its original production. The *Yung-lo* potters do not appear to have employed this fashion of decoration in direct association with blue *sous couverte*. The latter, however, is occasionally found on the interior of specimens covered externally with the former.

The *Hsuan-tê* era (1426–1435) of the *Ming* dynasty is remarkable for the first use of vitrifiable enamels in a manner so skilful and artistic as to command the highest admiration of Chinese connoisseurs. Not that, even then, the fashion of covering the surface of a vase with elaborate and brilliant designs came into vogue. Such a style had certainly been conceived by previous potters, but in the *Hsuan-tê* era, and indeed throughout the *Ming* dynasty down to the reign of Lung-ching (1567–1572), delicacy and fineness were the chief aim of the Chinese expert. He appreciated the value of vitrifiable enamels as a decorative agent, but subserved them always to the design of his piece, instead of making the latter a mere field for their display. The "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang gives four representative specimens of *Hsuan-tê* enamelled porcelain. In two of these red — the "colour of fresh blood" — is the dominant colour. Red persimmons with sepals and stalks in brown and leaves in green, are moulded with much skill into the forms of an ink-pot and a rouge-holder. The rouge-pot is 2½ inches high, and four inches in diameter. It was used by one of the imperial princesses to hold vermilion for painting the lips and face. Its owner asked a hundred taels for it at the time when H'siang wrote (second half of the sixteenth century), and it would command many times that price to-day. The third specimen is a tiny wine-cup, covered inside and outside with scroll-pattern engraved in the paste, and having a diapered border of red *sous couverte*. Round the body is coiled a vermilion dragon with teeth and foreclaws fixed in the rim. H'siang says that only two or three of these beautiful little cups remain throughout the empire, and that "a hundred taels is not considered too much to pay for a specimen." From such authenticated examples, not only accurately described in the text of the Catalogue, but also carefully reproduced in its illustrations, a clear idea may be formed of what kind of enamelled wares constituted the ideal of *Ming* collectors. There is no question of anything falling within the category of the various "families" into which European connoisseurs have divided the enamelled porcelains of China. The brilliantly massed enamels and elaborate designs that distinguish members of these "families" did not appear, or at any rate were not valued, in the greatest keramic periods of the *Ming* dynasty. One piece depicted by H'siang would probably be classed with *Famille Verte* by Jacquemart's disciples. It is a pagoda, a foot and a half high, its tiles green, its balustrades red, its doors yellow — all these colours in enamels — and its base inscribed with the *Hsuan-tê* year-mark in blue *sous couverte*. But even here the enamels are strictly subordinated to the general design, which feature must be taken as essentially characteristic of all the *Ming* masterpieces. In the *Tao-lu* it is stated: — "During the *Hsuan-tê* era there were among the manufactures white tea-cups, brilliant as jade. On the inside were painted flowers, in subdued colours" (blue *sous couverte*), "and above these a tiny dragon and a phœnix were traced in enamels with extreme delicacy. Beneath the flowers the year-mark was engraved, *Ta-Ming Hsuan-tê nien chi.* The surface of these cups was granulated like the flesh of a fowl or the skin of an orange. . . . There was no article of *Hsuan-tê* porcelain that was not charming. The small specimens were the most remarkable from an artistic point of view. The *Ming* porcelains shone with greater *éclat* at this epoch." The reader will observe that the term "porcelain" is here properly used — not soft-paste porcelain, but hard, fine ware, with white biscuit and clear timbre.

It will easily be conceived that among the enamelled porcelains of the early *Ming* potters, many pieces of a common, coarse type were included. Evidence of an indirect nature is furnished with regard to these by the *Tao-lu*, which says that white porcelain was manufactured in the *Hsuan-tê* kilns for the purpose of subsequently receiving decoration in colours over the glaze, but that such ware was not classed among choice products. From the few examples now surviving, this "common" porcelain seems to have had brilliant, but comparatively sparse and formal decoration in red, green, and gold, with occasional addition of blue under the glaze.

M. du Sartel, in his work "La Porcelaine de Chine," maintains that the process of enamel decoration over the glaze was not practised by Chinese potters even at so late a period as the *Hsuan-tê* era. He bases this conclusion on the hypothesis that red was the only colour then known, capable of being used for such a purpose. He is further guided by the term *Ten-pai-ki*, which, according to the "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics," designated vases having a white surface intended to be covered with painted decoration. In the case of such pieces, he says, the decoration was applied directly to the surface of the biscuit, and glaze was not used at all. It is impossible to endorse this conclusion. *Ten-pai-ki* was simply a technical appellation for pieces of white-glazed porcelain destined to be decorated with surface colours. It was, in fact, the "common" ware spoken of above. Even though no other evidence were forthcoming, the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang alone would suffice to upset M. du Sartel's theory as to the date of the first use of enamel decoration over the glaze. In Japan specimens of this inferior ware are to be met with at rare intervals. Their enamels are brilliant; their colours rich and full. But their technique indicates a certain want of care on the potter's part; a feature entirely consistent with the rule formulated above, that in most of the choice enamelled porcelains of the early *Ming* eras the enamels were an accessory, not a principal, element of the decorative design.

It was during the *Chêng-hwa* era (1465–1487) that the art of enamelled decoration received its most remarkable development. The "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics," speaking of the wares of the *Chêng-hwa* period, says:—"Thin porcelain was most esteemed, and pieces decorated with enamels were placed in the first rank. As for the blue employed, it was of ordinary quality. In the latter respect the *Chêng-hwa* porcelains were not comparable with those of the *Hsuan-tê* era; but in the matter of enamelled decoration the former far surpassed not only everything that had preceded but also everything that succeeded them. Their merit consisted in the skill of the painters and the beauty of the colouring materials. In a work entitled 'History of Yu-chang Keramics,' it is stated that among the porcelains of the *Chêng-hwa* era there were wine-vessels and cups ornamented with barn-yard fowl. These were of exceptional excellence. On the upper part was depicted a peony plant, and below a hen with her chickens, full of life and movement." There were also shallow, wide-mouthed cups with handles, decorated with grapes in coloured enamels. These were extremely beautiful. Then came cups ornamented with figure-subjects and lotus plants, or with grasshoppers; and then wine-cups, thin as paper, with blue flowers under the glaze. The names of these, like their shapes, were various. . . . In former times the Ming porcelains were classed in order of merit as follows:— First, those of the *Hsuan-tê* era; second, those of the *Chêng-hwa* era; third, those of the *Yung-lo* era; and fourth, those of the *Chia-ching* era. But the pieces of the *Hsuan-tê* period decorated with coloured enamels were far from equalling those of the *Chêng-hwa* period. In truth the designs painted upon porcelains of this latter era had an air of life and movement which no painter has since been able to imitate." It is necessary to make some allowance for the conservative propensities of this writer, who, like all Chinese connoisseurs, was evidently *laudator* *temporis acti*. To maintain that the *Chêng-hwa* enamelled porcelains remained always without peers would be an exaggeration, though they certainly deserved much of the praise bestowed on them.

Among the experts of the era the names of two have been transmitted. One, Ko Tan-jin, was remarkable for ability in depicting a hen and her chickens or two fighting cocks — designs which subsequently came to be regarded as the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the Chêng-hwa era. The other, Ko Chu, was famous as a manufacturer of wine-cups. Chinese records mention that, from the close of the *Ming* dynasty downwards, "every man of taste tried to put wine-cups of *Chêng-hwa* porcelain before his guests," and the same fancy exists equally strong among fashionable Japanese to-day. Another Chinese work, written about 1640 and translated by Dr. Bushell, says: — "On the days of new moon and of full moon I often went, while at the capital, to the fair at the Buddhist temple Tsu-ên-ssu, where rich men thronged to look at the old porcelain bowls exhibited there. Plain white cups of *Wan-li* (1573–1619) porcelain were several taels of silver each; those with the marks of *Hsuan-tê* or *Chêng-hwa*, twice as much more, up to the tiny cups decorated with fighting cocks, which could not be bought for less than a hundred taels of the purest silver, pottery being valued far more highly than jade." It is plain that very few of these celebrated cups have ever found their way out of China; Western collectors have not yet lived up to the standard of paying a hundred and fifty dollars for a baby cup, about an inch and a half in depth and as much in diameter. One hundred and fifty dollars, too, does not appear to have been the limit, for it is recorded that an official who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century had two of these little cups which were valued at fifteen hundred dollars the pair. Lotus leaves and blossoms, figure subjects, insects, especially grasshoppers, and floral designs, were among the favourite decorations of the era. Among the specimens depicted in H'siang's Catalogue there are four of the celebrated little wine-cups. Two of them have the lower part of the outer surface coloured so as to represent sward, from which spring flowers — the coxcomb, narcissus, and marigold. A dragon-fly hovers in the white field of one cup and a mantis creeps in the green of the other. The tiny vessels have a diameter of two inches and a height of one and a half, yet they are said to have been valued at 100 taels the pair in H'siang's day. The two other cups shown have flat bottoms and are of similar dimensions. They are decorated with blue *sous couverte* in combination with vitrifiable enamels. The designs are flowers, fighting cocks and geese swimming waves. Judging from these four specimens, the palette of the *Chêng-hwa* decorator contained five colours, red, green, yellow, blue, and purple.

Every one of H'siang's *Chêng-hwa* specimens is a dainty and choice object. The miniature wine-cups spoken of above show that the experts of the time had conceived and skilfully utilised the idea of making enamel pictures on their pieces. That is to say, they no longer subordinated their enamels to the general form of the specimen, but used them to depict independent subjects on its white surface. They still, indeed, practised the former method, and regarded its skilful employment as their greatest *tour de force*. H'siang's Catalogue contains exquisite examples of this nature: a lamp in the form of a lotus flower, with green leaves and delicate pink petals; a wine-cup in the shape of a magnolia yulan flower, purple outside and resting on a brown stem with green leaves, and so on. But, in addition to these charming fashions, the enamels now began to be used for picture painting. This is well exemplified in a tazza-shaped cup of pure white, round the lobe of which runs a band of green vine-leaves and tendrils with purple grapes. Thus the student is brought into contact with the enamelled porcelains familiar to Western collectors and divided by Albert Jacquemart into the three families of *Chrysanthémo-Pæonienne*, *Verte*, and *Rouge*. Not yet, indeed, is there any question of those large, elaborately ornamented pieces, fondly ascribed by Occidental collectors to *Ming* factories. Such things are conspicuous by their absence from H'siang's Catalogue. Nevertheless, the tazza-shaped cup depicted by him, if not actually a member of the *Famille Verte*, would probably be regarded as a very near relative. Dr. Bushell, commenting on H'siang's Catalogue, says: "One may be disappointed to find among the pictures none of the large vases and jars of the early reigns of this (the present) dynasty of which so many are included in European collections. These are really more modern, and the finest belong to the reign of *Kang-hsi*, so that one of a pair is often found with a *Ming* mark beneath, the other with a censer, flower, or other emblem: yet some connoisseurs pride themselves on being able to distinguish the genuine *Ming* in this class from the false, confessing, however, that it is a difficult matter. The reign of *Hsuan-tê* has always been celebrated for its blue-and-white, the reign of *Chêng-hwa* for its paintings in enamel colours, and a visit to any crockery stall in China will show most of the commonest articles with two marks, a transparent deception, kept up to the present day." This criticism, by a connoisseur of unequalled knowledge, cannot be too strongly emphasised. The term "*Ming* porcelain" has long been applied with absolute assurance to many imposing specimens of highly ornamented ware in European collections, though very few of them probably belong to a period more remote than the end of the seventeenth century. The closing periods of the *Ming* dynasty may, indeed, be more largely represented, though the nature of their wares renders this unlikely. Genuine specimens of *Chêng-hwa* enamelled porcelain are virtually unknown outside China, and even in the country of their origin they cannot be found without great difficulty.

To ware of this class — *i.e.*, ware having the surface decorated with independent designs in coloured enamels — the name *Wu-tsai-ki*, or "five-coloured porcelain," seems to have been first applied in the *Chêng-hwa* period. Thenceforth the designation continued to be employed even when it had ceased to be numerically accurate. The original "five colours" were red, green, violet or purple, yellow, and black or brown. Adding blue under the glaze and gold, it will be seen that the colours actually at the service of the decorator were seven.

Another development made by the *Chêng-hwa* experts was the application of enamel decoration to coloured grounds. Two beautiful specimens of this nature are depicted by H'siang. In each the body colour is pale yellow and the enamels are green and brown. The latter are applied in the subordinate style; that is to say, they cover leaves, tendrils, and branches twining round melon-shaped or chrysanthemum-shaped vases. These pieces are examples of highly refined taste and excellent technique. They show that the fame of the *Chêng-hwa* potters was not undeserved. H'siang says that the designs supplied to Ching-tê-chên for imperial porcelains were "drawn in the palace by celebrated artists," and that "the different colours were laid on and shaded with perfect skill."

In the *Chêng-hwa* era, as well as in the *Hsuan-tê*, comparatively coarse varieties of enamelled porcelain were manufactured. Doubtless many of these, did they survive, would be attractive objects in the eyes of Western collectors. But they are virtually non-existent. Chinese connoisseurs did not think them worth preserving, and the rare specimens found in Japan cannot be confidently regarded as genuine.

During the next three periods of the *Ming* dynasty —*Hung-chih* (1488–1505), *Chên-tê* (1506–1521), and *Chia-ching* (1522–1566) — the manufacture of enamelled porcelains appears to have been continued pretty much on the lines of the *Chêng-hwa* experts. In the *Hung-chih* era, special skill was developed in the production of yellow monochromes, and this colour occupied a prominent place in the choicest works of the time. In the *Chêng-tê* era, renewed supplies of the much prized Mohammedan blue having been obtained, pieces decorated with blue *sous couverte* came again into fashion, and were preferred to enamelled wares, though excellent specimens of the latter were no doubt made at Ching-tê-chên. The same remark applies to the next era, *Chia-ching*. In the *Tao-lu* it is stated that only vases decorated with blue under the glaze were then esteemed, and that the number or pieces having enamelled designs was small. In support of this statement there is the evidence of the Imperial Requisitions. Among the wares enumerated in the Requisition for the year 1529 (translated by Dr. Bushell), there is not one piece fairly belonging to the *Wu-tsai-ki* class.

Another important style of decoration was of the kind known to Western connoisseurs as "reserved." The enamels used to depict the design were not superposed; each was run to the edge of the other. Of this variety the best known and not the least beautiful had blue designs *sous couverte* surrounded by yellow enamel, which covered the whole of the surface except the part occupied by the design. Great skill was needed to apply enamels in this manner. In rarer cases the places of the two colours were interchanged; the design being in yellow enamel and the body of the vase blue. To manufacture such pieces the potter must have contrived that after the stoving *au grand feu* — by which the blue was developed — the design should emerge white, so as to receive the yellow enamel, which was fused by a second stoving *au petit feu*. A deep brown, or chocolate, enamel was similarly employed in the spaces between yellow or blue designs. Finally, white-slip decoration was applied to the biscuit at the same time as blue (*sous couverte*), and both were covered with colourless, translucid glaze before stoving. The Imperial Requisition for the year 1529 includes all these varieties with two exceptions. It runs thus: —

Rice Bowls with blue ground surrounding yellow phœnixes flying through fairy flowers.

Cups with yellow ground surrounding blue clouds and dragons.

Wine Cups and *Libation Cups* with blue ground surrounding yellow phœnixes flying through fairy flowers.

Dishes and *Plates* with deep brown ground enclosing pairs of yellow dragons and clouds.

In the *Lung-ching* (1567–1572) and *Wan-li* (1573–1619) eras artistic taste appears to have undergone a change. Wealth of ornament became the fashion of the time. The enamelled decoration of the celebrated *Chêng-hwa* era had been valued not more for brilliancy and purity of colour than for delicacy and fidelity of delineation. The enamel decoration of the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* eras was valued chiefly for richness and profusion. Blue *sous couverte* occupies a prominent place in the *Wu-tsai-ki* of the period. The surfaces of pieces, evidently manufactured with great care, were loaded with designs in which the heavy, deep blue of the time, brilliant emerald green, and full-bodied *rouge mat* appeared in nearly equal masses. Dr. Bushell incidentally notices this fact when he writes: — "The Imperial Requisition of the *Lung-ching* era includes table-services, rice-bowls, and saucers, tea-cups and wine-cups of different form, jars, flower-vases and flower-pots, censers and scent-boxes, vinegar droppers, jars with covers surmounted by lions, &c. The decoration is far more elaborate, but is all put under the one class of blue painting on white ground, although parts of the designs are sometimes described as filled up with enamel colours, or painted in gold, over the glaze." To the same classes belong the following, copied from the Imperial Requisition of *Wan-li*, where they are described as "Porcelains Painted in Blue on White Ground": —

Plates with, *outside*, interlacing sprays of peonies with the eight precious symbols, crested waves, Indian lotus flowers, fabulous monsters in enamel colours, floral brocade designs; *inside*, a pair of dragons among clouds, dragons and phœnixes faintly engraved under the glaze, fairy flowers, lions sporting with embroidered balls, the eight Buddhist symbols, sceptres and cloud scrolls, branching fungus, flowers and fruit.

Plates with, *outside*, winding sprays of jasmine and fairy flowers, monsters and tigers, branching fungus; *inside*, dragons and phœnixes in enamel colours; on the *border*, the inscription, *Fu ju tung hai*, the eight Buddhist symbols, brocaded vases, bands of fairy flowers and ribbons with the eight precious symbols.

Plates with, *outside*, interlacing bamboo leaves and fungus, flowers and fruit, the eight precious symbols, pairs of dragons and phœnixes; *inside*, dragons flying through flowers of the four seasons, longevity inscriptions in colours, familiar scenes, fairy peach-trees; a border of grapes.

Cups with, *outside*, a pair of dragons interrupting a band of foreign pomegranates, lions playing with embroidered balls; *inside*, dragons flying through flowers, sceptres and cloud scrolls; on the *border*, fragrant plants, nine red dragons in blue sea-waves, water birds in enamel colours and lotus flowers, with Sanscrit Buddhist inscriptions round the edge.

Cups with, *outside*, pairs of phœnixes and dragons in pairs; *inside*, yellow hibiscus flowers, interlacing branches of fungus, chrysanthemum flowers in enamel colours.

Boxes with historical scenes; on the *covers*, dragons, playing boys, the flowers of the seasons, dragons and clouds in enamel colours, flowers, fruit, and birds, fungus branches with antique longevity characters.

Vases with spouts, with dragon medallions, flowers of the four seasons, the Indian lotus supporting Sanscrit characters, phœnixes flying through flowers of the seasons, grapes and western watermelons, dragons grasping sacred longevity characters, apricot leaves, water plants in enamel colours, with fish painted in gold.

Wine Cups and *Plates* with, *outside*, peonies, golden chrysanthemums, hibiscus flowers, dragons and phœnixes, the flowers of the seasons, the eight precious symbols in colours, grapes, bees round a plum-tree; *inside*, hibiscus flowers and peonies, antique longevity characters, the lotus painted in enamel colours, and ancient coins.

Chopstick Dishes with sea-waves, clouds, and dragons, *outside;* dragons in relief, *inside.*

Vases with phœnixes flying through flowers of the seasons, floral covered ground with dragons in colours penetrating flowers of the seasons, the eight precious emblems on fungus supporting jewels and fragrant plants.

Vases with landscapes and flying lions, dragons with clouds, peacocks and peonies, the eight immortals crossing the sea, longevity inscriptions, and historical scenes in enamel colours.

In all these specimens blue *sous couverte* enters largely into the decoration. Enamels alone were, however, employed. From the same requisition the following is taken: —

2. — PAINTED IN ENAMEL COLOURS.

Chess Boards with clouds and dragons.

Pencil Handles with dragons rising from the sea into clouds.

Pencil Dippers with dragons in sea-waves, circular ornaments and the flowers of the four seasons.

Flower Vases with bands of sceptre ornaments enclosing landscapes and branching fungus.

Pricket Candlesticks with green hills surrounded by sea-waves with clouds, dragons, historical scenes, fragrant plants and lotus petals.

Oil Lamps with dragons in clouds and phœnixes flying through the flowers of the four seasons.

Fish Bowls with landscapes surrounded by flowers, soaring dragons, and phœnixes in blue clouds.

Perfume Boxes with fragrant flowers, carved in openwork with fir-leaf brocades and with flowers of the seasons.

Jars with brocaded ground in round patterns, the flowers of the four seasons, fruit, birds, and the eight precious symbols.

Fan Boxes with dragons in clouds and arabesques.

Pencil Rests with mountain scenes in openwork.

Handkerchief Boxes with flowers emblematic of the four seasons.

Slop Boxes with cloud dragons, arabesques, and flowers of the four seasons.

Fish Bowls with dragons soaring into the clouds, arabesques, and fragrant plants.

The ubiquity of the dragon in the designs of this period cannot fail to strike the reader. Figure subjects also came into vogue, but they were not the Mandarins and slender ladies familiar to Western collectors: these belong to a later era. The *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* decorators chose the Taoist Immortals and other mythical personages; the "hundred boys at play," or, in their historical scenes, warriors of fame. Wares thus profusely decorated exhibited more of the artisan than of the artist. Some small specimens presented technical features almost worthy of the dynasty's best traditions, but in large pieces the *pâte* was heavy and coarse and the designs were clumsily executed. The colours, however, were always not only rich and full, but also combined and massed so to produce a strong and harmonious effect. Immense quantities of porcelain must have been produced. It is stated in Dr. Bushell's "Chinese Porcelain before the Present Dynasty," that "the imperial potteries were still at *Ching-tê-chên*, and it was the practice to appoint eunuchs to superintend the manufacture and to bring up the porcelain to Peking. They took with them the imperial order for the quantity required to such an extravagant amount that several pages of the *Chian-hsi tung-chih*, which gives the statistics of the province, are filled with remonstrances of censors on the subject. According to one of these, in the fifth year, 1571, of *Lung-ching* no less than 805,870 pairs of things were ordered, including bowls, tea-cups, wine-cups, and vases of bright red colour inside and out, large and small dragon-painted bowls for fish and boxes of rectangular form. It was ordered to be sent to the capital in batches, the first lot of 10,597 pairs by the ninth month of the same year, the second of 10,750 before the twelfth month, the remainder in eight successive lots. He explains the difficult production of the large dragon fish-bowls, which were to be decorated with ornaments in relief and to have broad bases and bulging bodies; the great expense of the large fish-bowls to be painted in enamel colours and the fear of their being broken in the kiln; the too elaborate designs for the square boxes in three tiers, which would require almost a life-time to turn out. . . . In the next reign, *Wan-li*, in the eleventh year, A.D. 1583, there is on record another imperial order for over 96,000 pieces, and more remonstrances are made by censors on the quantity of pricket candlesticks, wind screens, and paint-brush vases, on the uselessness of such things as chessmen, jars to put them in, and chessboards, on the trifling importance of the screens, paint-brush barrels, flower-vases, covered jars, and boxes. One censor ventures to ask whether 20,000 covered boxes of different form and decoration, 4,000 vases for flowers of varied shape, and 5,000 jars with covers, is not too large a number; and whether dragons and phœnixes, flowering plants and such like elaborate decoration, carved in openwork (*ling-lung*), and painted in enamel colours, is not work of too complicated a kind. He quotes the ancient emperor *Shun*, whose vessels are said to have been unvarnished, and *Yü*, who refused to chisel his sacrificial bowls, and he appeals to his sovereign to imitate them. The result of this memorial was the lessening by one-half of the quantity of pricket candlesticks, chess-boards, screens, and paint-brush vases. Such wholesale production accounts for the abundance of porcelain of this date in Peking, where a street hawker may be seen with sweetmeats piled on dishes over a yard in dameter, or ladling iced syrup out of Ming bowls, and there is hardly a butcher's shop without a large Ming jar, generally broken, it is true, on the counter for throwing in scraps of meat. This is the *Ming Tz'u*, the porcelain of the Ming dynasty "par excellence," with good glaze and a brilliant style of colouring characteristic of the period, but of coarse paste and often clumsy form, the bottom of the vase or jar may be unglazed, and the mark of the reign inscribed outside near the rim."

It may, indeed, be confidently asserted that from the Western collector's point of view, the use of vitrifiable enamels for decorating large pieces, such as flower-vases, fish-bowls, covered jars and so forth, came into vogue during the last century of the *Ming* dynasty (1550–1650). The wares of this period are virtually the only representatives of the dynasty that have found their way westward. Many of them went to Japan, where the slightly archaic character of their decoration gave them value in the eyes of the Tea Clubs. They were known as *Ban-reki Aka-e*, or "red picture ware of *Ban-reki*" (Chinese *Wan-li*), a term which almost became a synonym for "Ming enamelled porcelains." The example set by these wares undoubtedly exercised strong influence on the style of the Japanese Imari potters, just then beginning to practise the art of decoration with enamels. In both wares is found the same massing of full-bodied, brilliant enamels with strong, heavy blue under the glaze. The Japanese, however, very soon departed from the stiff, conventional fashions of the Chinese decorator, and developed a much more artistic style. But the advantage in colours remained always with the experts of the Middle Kingdom. The purity and lustre of their enamels and the depth of their blue *sous-couverte* were so unrivalled as to be characteristic.

The *Tao-lu* records the names of two celebrated potters who flourished during the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* eras. They have already been referred to in connection with porcelains different from the class now under consideration. But they must be mentioned here also. One, by name Tsui, lived in the middle of the sixteenth century. He excelled in reproducing the choice wares of *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa* eras. "During his lifetime his productions were held in the highest esteem. They were called *Tsui-Kung-yao* (porcelains of the Sieur Tsui). All over the empire men purchased them with the keenest *empressement*. Among his pieces the cups were sensibly larger than those of the periods *Hsuan-tê* and *Chêng-hwa*, but in delicacy and beauty they were entirely similar." The second expert, Hu, flourished towards the close of the same century. Chiefly remarkable for imitations of *Sung* specimens, he seems to have also produced small pieces enamelled after the *Chêng-hwa* fashions. The wares of both these potters belong, therefore, to a category distinct, in respect of style, from the characteristic *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* enamelled porcelains.

It has already been recorded that with the close of the *Wan-li* era (1619) the porcelain manufacture of the *Ming* dynasty ceased to flourish. Nor does it seem to have sensibly recovered its previous prosperity until the *Tsing* Tartars had occupied the throne for a considerable time. In fact there is an interval of 42 years, from 1619 to 1661, concerning the keramic productions of which little can be stated with certainty. Occasionally specimens of enamelled or blue-and-white porcelains are found which strongly resemble the *Wan-li genre*, having heavy, somewhat coarse *pâte*, and decoration of a brilliant but not over-refined character. These pieces may, indeed, have been produced at the *Kang-hsi* factories before the latter had begun to develop the technical excellence and artistic taste that made their *chefs-d'œuvre* so famous. But the probability is that they belong to the last twenty-five years of the *Ming* dynasty, or to the first era — *Shun-chih* (1644–1661) — of the *Tsing*. The point is not of much importance. The very rare surviving specimens of enamelled porcelain that bear the *Shun-chih* mark show the era to be unworthy of special attention from a keramic point of view.

With the accession of the great emperor Kang-hsi (1662–1722) the imperial factories passed under the direction of the celebrated Tang, and the manufacture of enamelled porcelains, in common with that of all other wares, received a great impulse. The quality of the *pâte* soon began to show an improvement which increased until a very high degree of excellence was attained. The heavy and often uneven texture of the biscuit in large pieces of *Wan-li* ware and the rudely finished, rimless base disappeared. Thenceforth close-grained, homogeneous *pâte* and careful technique in every detail became essential. Similar progress was made in the domain of decorative art. Instead of confining himself to archaic dragons and phœnixes, grotesque figures of mythical beings, patterns borrowed from textile fabrics, and so forth, the decorator went to the realm of pictorial art for inspiration, and copied flowers, trees, landscapes, figures from contemporary life, domestic scenes, elaborate arabesques, rich floral scrolls, intricate diapers, and in short everything that could serve such a purpose. To this new departure are due the so-called " Mandarin Porcelains," which M. Jacquemart assigned to Japan, because the decoration on other Chinese articles of *vertu* did not, so far as his knowledge went, offer examples of the official costumes prescribed by the Tartars. Even if this absence of parallel really existed, as stated by M. Jacquemart, it would not go far to support the theory or warrant the fancy that Japanese keramists could have chosen as a favourite decorative subject the persons and costumes of a foreign people, objects comparatively unfamiliar and quite unpicturesque. The " Mandarin Porcelains " had nothing whatever to do with Japan. Liberally as the potters of the latter country borrowed decorative designs from the Middle Kingdom, they seldom copied the official figures of the *Tsing* dynasty. All that need be noted with regard to the use of figure subjects on Chinese porcelain is that when the long flowing robe, the girdle with jade pendants, and the crape head-dress of ancient times are replaced by the full-sleeved surcoat, the round cap with button and plume, and the queue of the Tartar epoch, it is possible to be sure that there is no question of *Ming* ware. In Oriental art the soft folds and flowing curves of drapery take the place occupied in the West by the graceful contours of the human figure. So soon as the Chinese keramist found that his palette enabled him to depict luxuriantly apparelled damsels and richly robed officials, such subjects seemed to him not less natural than nude nymphs and muscular heroes have always seemed to the potters of Europe and America. Moreover, in China the bright colours of official uniforms and private apparel offer a marked contrast to the generally sombre scenery of the country and the ungraceful architecture of the cities. An artist applying polychrome decoration to porcelain, and seeking to travel beyond the range of dragons, phœnixes, and supernatural beings, could scarcely have hesitated to derive inspiration from what may be said to have been the only gay objects amid his surroundings. Accordingly the prevalence of figure subjects — sovereigns, officials, ladies, and children — is a striking feature of *Kang-hsi* enamelled porcelain.

With respect to enamels, the colours of the *Ming* potters were still employed, but there was often added to them a blue enamel — varying from brilliant blue to lavender — the presence of which is alone sufficient to mark a piece as belonging to a period later than the *Ming* dynasty, since before the *Kang-hsi* era blue, if used, invariably appears, not as an enamel, but as a pigment under the glaze. The enamels themselves cannot be said to have been purer or more brilliant than those of the *Ming* epoch. On the contrary, owing to their more profuse employment, the latter often convey an impression of greater richness and solidity. Green was the dominant colour of the *Kang-hsi* experts. Their porcelains constitute the "*Famille Verte*" of French collectors. In combination with figure subjects there are usually found landscapes with fantastic rocks and partially conventionalized trees, in the colours of which nature is not always consulted. The medallion fashion of decoration, though already familiar, may be said to have first come into large favour in this era. It constantly occurs on the necks of vases or in other secondary positions. The subjects within the medallions are, for the most part, flowering shrubs, dragons, phœnixes, or miniature landscapes. It must be admitted, however, that in the case of the larger *Kang-hsi* specimens, wealth and brilliancy of decorative effect rather than grace or vigor of artistic conception constituted a chief merit. Only in some of the choicest pieces did the potter apparently think of anything beyond a striking *ensemble*. He was generally stiff and conventional, repeating his figure subjects with persistence as stubborn as that which marks his Occidental *confrère's* love of the nude. From this criticism must be excepted the little cups and bowls of egg-shell China for which the *Kang-hsi* era was scarcely less famous than the *Chêng-hwa*. On these exquisite specimens of keramic skill groups of bending grasses, bunches of flowers, blossoms and branches, and so forth are represented with fidelity and grace. It is difficult to speak too highly of this egg-shell ware. Its technique is perfect, the purity and brilliancy of the enamels not being more remarkable than the skill displayed in applying them.

The quality of the *Kang-hsi* enamelled porcelain is exceptionally good. Neither among wares that preceded nor among those that succeeded it were there any of finer *pâte* or more lustrous and uniform glaze. The exposed portions of the biscuit resemble soap-stone, so smooth are they to the touch and so compact in texture. As a rule, with very rare exceptions, the bottom of every piece is carefully finished and glazed. Year-marks occur seldom: they are commonest upon small and choice specimens. Other marks are found, but they usually take the form of a four-footed censer, a leaf, or something equally without chronological significance.

In the majority of elaborately enamelled *Kang-hsi* porcelains blue under the glaze is either absent altogether, or plays a very subordinate *rôle*. Green is the most conspicuous colour. "*Famille Verte*," in short, is a well chosen epithet, though not applicable to the egg-shell ware spoken of above. But there was also manufactured during the same era a class of porcelain in the decoration of which blue *sous couverte* constituted a feature scarcely less important than enamels. The fact is interesting because a singular resemblance, verging on identity, exists between the style of this ware and that of the celebrated Imari porcelain of Japan. It is easily conceivable that Western connoisseurs have often been perplexed to distinguish the one from the other. M. Jacquemart, who applies to such porcelains the term "*Famille Chrysanthémo-Pæonéenne*," observes:—"It is the more necessary to create a name for this family since it includes Chinese and Japanese productions empirically confounded under the false denomination of Japanese porcelain." M. Jacquemart's theory is good, but his practice is bad. For having observed the existence of such confusion, he proceeds to make it worse confounded by ascribing to China wares which are unquestionably Japanese. That most conscientious of connoisseurs, Mr. A. W. Franks, detects the French writer's error, but remains evidently uncertain as to its extent. The fact is, that this fashion of decoration, though the rule in Japan, was the exception in China. For one piece of Chinese porcelain thus decorated, thousands of Japanese are to be found. The term invented by Jacquemart conveys a good idea of the style of the ware. It is at once distinguishable from the "*Famille Verte*" by the fact that green occupies a comparatively insignificant place in the decoration. The salient colours are blue and red, almost equally balanced, the former under the glaze. A constantly recurring feature in the design is the *hanakago*, or basket of flowers, so well known to collectors of Japanese porcelain. In conjunction with this, or independently, are masses of chrysanthemums and flowering peonies, bordered by floral scrolls traced in gold on a blue ground and generally broken by medallions. Diapers and arabesques are freely used. Or again, conventional rocks with flowers growing from them form the central design, around which are disposed bands of blue with gold scrolls, and broad rings divided into panels containing fishes, crustaceans, marine animals, birds, insects, phœnixes, flowers, and miniature figures. Even in the absence of other evidence, these porcelains alone would suffice to dispel all doubt as to the existence of an intimate relation between Japanese and Chinese decorative motives. The only easily detected difference between the styles is in the manner of distributing the design. Here the Japanese shows a far higher artistic instinct than the Chinese. The latter, remembering chiefly that he had a certain ground to fill, filled it without any idea of charming the fancy as well as dazzling the eye. His conception of division was purely mathematical. He parcelled out the surface by the aid of concentric borders or parallel lines, and if he found that he had to occupy two spaces of wholly different dimensions, separated, perhaps, by a leafy branch or a bunch of flowers, it did not shock him to fill one with a big phœnix and the other with a miniature specimen of the same bird. Hard, mechanical practicality was the prominent trait of his methods. But the Japanese, when he sat down to decorate a vase, delighted to divide its surface by some eccentrically symmetrical disposition of lines and curves, the spaces enclosed within which, while they admirably preserved their mutual equipoise as well as their sensible though not easily traceable relation to a common centre, acquired so much individuality that to fill them with wholly diverse decorative subjects never suggested any discordant contrast. Little observation is needed to familiarise the connoisseur with this prevailing bent of Japanese decorative art, and to enable him to distinguish between the styles of the neighbouring empires. At the same time, neither this guide, nor yet the greater freedom, boldness, and fidelity of the Japanese decorator's brush, can always be implicitly relied on. There are Chinese and Japanese specimens of which the photographs could not be distinguished. This is especially the case with plates, and other flat objects. Here, however, the connoisseur has the assistance of "spur-marks," or little points —

generally three or five — which appear upon the under surface of Japanese pieces, showing where the tiny pillars of clay that supported them in the oven were broken off. These scarcely ever occur on Chinese wares, and are therefore a criterion, so far as they go. But inasmuch as their use was generally limited to plates, dishes, and so forth, they must not always be looked for on vases, bowls, or jars. So far as colours are concerned, the blue of the Chinese potter is lighter than that of the Japanese, and his red is semi-transparent, whereas the red of the latter is strong, full-bodied, and opaque. But even these differences are not always observable. The *pâte*, of course, is the ultimate and unerring guide. When the connoisseur has learned to discriminate between the close-grained, oily clay of China and the comparatively porous, gritty material of Japan, his difficulties are at an end. Marks of Chinese eras and factories are no index. They were freely copied in Japan, and though the nature of the penmanship may have significance for ideographic experts, it need scarcely be discussed here.

After what has been written above, it should not be necessary to correct a misconception originally due to M. Jacquemart, that porcelains of the *Chrysanthémo-Pæonéenne* family are the usual ware, the common furniture of China, seen about houses and in gardens, and constituting the greater part of the utensils used at table. Such porcelains have always been, on the contrary, exceptional in China. Some critics have inferred that the origin of their peculiar decoration is attributable to Japan. There are reasons, however, which forbid the student to accept such a theory in its entirety. An examination of Chinese paintings

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VERMILION-INK BOX OF *CHÊNG-HWA*, SOFT PASTE PORCELAIN, DECORATED WITH BLUE *SOUS COUVERTE.*

Height, 1½ Inches. (See page [illegible].)

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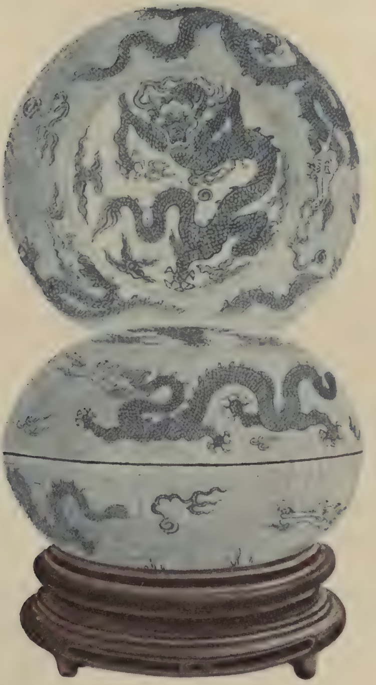

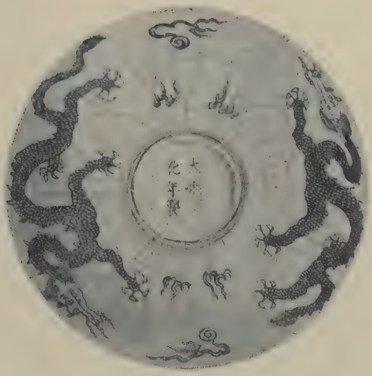
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dating from the *Yuan* and *Ming* periods reveals nearly all the elements of the *Chrysanthémo-Pæonéenne* decoration, while the purely decorative elements, as scrolls, diapers, and arabesques, are to be found in textile fabrics of the same eras. Japan, borrowing freely in every age from her neighbour though often modifying what she borrowed, was in possession of all these elements before her keramists thought of attempting polychromatic decoration. The question reduces itself, therefore, to the method of combining the elements, and here the credit does not apparently belong to either China or Japan alone. It is impossible to mistake the presence of Persian influence in the floral traceries of the *Chrysanthémo-Pæonéenne* family. The "Dessin cachemire" of the early Delft potters is certainly a near relative, and in all probability the parent, of the Japanese and Chinese fashion. It is known that the style of Japanese polychromatic decoration was largely modified by Dutch suggestion, and it is easy to conceive that Persian examples, finding their way to the Far East *viâ* the Factories at Cambron and Deshima, may have inspired a fashion of combination and arrangement largely adopted by the potters of Imari and sparingly copied at Ching-tê-chên. Perhaps, then, there is warrant for saying that, if Japan owed much to China, she partly repaid the debt by re-grouping the decorative elements which she had received from the Middle Kingdom, and evolving what may be called the natural style, in contradistinction to the artificial, or mathematical, style of her neighbour. Thus there is no reason to be surprised that the porcelains of Imari, though they derived their decorative origin from China, soon attracted favourable notice in the Middle Kingdom itself, and were admitted to a place among the ornaments of refined households. This last fact, attested by the Missionaries in China during the seventeenth century, confirms the hypothesis mentioned above that the Chinese *Famille Chrysanthémo-Pœonéenne* borrowed much of its beauty from Japanese models.

Toward the close of the era, that is to say, in the early years of the eighteenth century, decoration of this class underwent a marked change, the characteristics of which are well described by Mr. A. W. Franks as "a prevalence of half-tints and broken colours, together with the appearance of a beautiful ruby red derived from gold." Porcelains thus decorated constitute the *Famille Rose* of French connoisseurs. M. Jacquemart, to whom this classification is due, falls into a serious error with regard to the antiquity of such ware. "An incontestible fact," he writes ("Histoire de La Céramique," pp. 77, 78), "is henceforth established, that during the *Hung-chih* period (1488–1515) the Chinese *Famille Rose* furnished cups of the most admirable *pâte* on which birds, flowers, and insects were represented with the greatest perfection." This misconception is the more surprising inasmuch as the same writer notes that the porcelains sent to Europe by the Jesuit missionaries during the reign of Kang-hsi and manufactured under their very eyes "had nothing in common with even those pieces of the *Famille Rose* which are considered least ancient." Evidently it did not occur to the distinguished connoisseur that this absence of relationship to the *Famille Rose* on the part of porcelains sent to Europe in the seventeenth century, might be attributed, not to the disuse of colours employed during the two preceding centuries, but to the fact that such colours had not yet been added to the decorator's palette. Independent observation and the direct testimony of Chinese *virtuosi* establish beyond all doubt the fact that the use of ruby enamel and half-tints, such as rose colour and light pink, commenced in the closing years of the *Kang-hsi* era, and began to be largely practised in the following reign. Collectors may be assured that, with very rare exceptions, good specimens of the *Famille Rose* belong to one or other of the two eras *Yung-ching* (1723–1736), or *Chien-lung* (1736–1795). To be strictly accurate, the epoch of the family's most highly developed manufacture ought, perhaps, to be extended so as to include the opening years of the *Chia-tsing* era; say, up to 1810. But such precision is seldom possible or essential.

The presence of ruby enamel passing through rose to very light pink and the prevalence of half-tints or broken colours are sufficiently characteristic of this beautiful porcelain. It is further distinguished by white, or greenish white enamel, which does not appear on other wares. A general and even more easily recognised feature is that many of the enamels of the *Famille Rose* are not vitreous: they do not show the brilliant transparency that marks the decoration of the "*Famille Verte*." It was natural that in using the soft, subdued colours, more like the pigments of the Western potter than the original vitrifiable enamels of the Chinese, the Ching-tê-chên artist should vary his decorative fashions. He no longer took figure subjects as his principle models, but sought inspiration rather in the floral kingdom; blossoms and fruits offering a field exceptionally suited to his new palette. More charmingly decorated ware it would be difficult to find than choice specimens of the *Famille Rose* over the surface of which spread branches of peach or pomegranite, the stems, leaves, and fruit depicted with perfect fidelity, and the varying tones of the natural colours reproduced to perfection. Rich, luscious strawberries, apparently growing in the glaze, blossoms of plum and magnolia, lotus flowers, and other graceful objects of the floral kingdom were included in the decorator's *répertoire*, and nothing could exceed the delicacy and truthfulness of their pictures on his pieces. It will be understood that reference is here made not to porcelain of the *Kang-hsi* era alone, but also to ware manufactured down to the end of the eighteenth century, the greater part dating from the reigns of Yung-ching and Chien-lung. During the period of about eighty years from 1720 to 1800, an unvarying level of excellence was maintained in *Famille Rose* ware. The collector should have no difficulty in recognising a good specimen, for though similarly decorated porcelains were produced in quantity, especially during the *Taou-Kwang* (1821–1851) and *Hien-fung* (1851–1862) eras, the inferior quality of their *pâte* and glaze determines their date at once. Milk white, pure perfectly uniform glaze, and fine, close-grained biscuit are absolutely essential features in good examples of the *Famille Rose*. Pieces younger than the early years of the present century, though their decoration may be skilful and attractive, are always deficient in these important points.

Perhaps the most celebrated porcelains of this class in the eyes of Western collectors are the "ruby-backs" and "rose-backs." They are ware of egg-shell thinness, generally bowls, cups, or plates, having their under surface covered with ruby or rose glaze, the colour of which is transmitted through the translucid *pâte*, producing an indescribably soft and delicate effect like that seen in the enamel of a sea-shell. The upper surface is sparsely or profusely decorated with finely executed designs in coloured enamels. In some specimens, highly prized by Chinese connoisseurs, this enamel decoration is absent: in its place are found designs incised in the biscuit and showing faintly through the glaze. The enamels used in decorating these ruby-backs and rose-backs are not always of the *Famille Rose* type. Frequently the brilliant, vitreous colours of the *Famille Verte* are employed, and in such cases the designs are not confined to floral subjects; figures and landscapes also make their appearance. These latter porcelains belong to the Rose Family chiefly in respect of the enamel covering of their under surface.

Another very beautiful variety of the Rose Family is distinguished by the distribution of the decoration in medallions. In these pieces the inner surface is either white or has floral designs in blue *sous couverte*. On the outer surface medallions containing floral or figure subjects, landscapes, birds and so forth, are divided by a yellow, ruby, pink, green, or red ground, which is chagrined and enriched by floral scrolls engraved in the paste. Such ware is well known to Western collectors. It includes the much prized "Medallion bowls," made for imperial use, perhaps the most elaborately decorated examples of Chinese porcelain. The porcelain itself is not so thin and does not belong to so high a technical grade as that of the ruby-backs and rose-backs. It is characteristic of an era when the keramist depended on wealth of decoration rather than on quality of paste and glaze. Indeed many of the Medallion Bowls treasured by European and American collectors belong to the *Chia-tsing* (1796-1827) and *Taou-kwang* (1821–1851) periods. Estimable enough in their line, these more modern wares are always lacking in delicacy and finish as compared with their *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* predecessors.

In speaking of the Rose Family no attempt is here made to distinguish between porcelains dating from the closing years of the *Kang-hsi* era and those of the *Yung-ching* or *Chien-lung* factories. No distinction can, in fact, be made. And within certain limitations the same may be said of enamelled wares generally. The *Yung-ching* era (1723–1735), as will be presently shown, is not without titles to independent fame, but in the matter of porcelain decorated with vitrifiable enamels its keramists struck out no new lines. They merely carried the old to an unsurpassed point of excellence. Coming to the *Chien-lung* time (1736–1795), the Green Family practically disappears, the potters applying themselves especially to decoration of the *Famille Rose* type. But in their employment of full-toned enamels they inaugurated a virtually new and pleasing departure by means of delicate tints of green, yellow, and red combined sparsely with blue under the glaze. This type of ware is distinguished by its subdued tone and by the conventional character of the decoration, which consists usually of floral scrolls, arabesques, and diapers. From the latter years of the same era dates also the custom of covering the inside as well as the outside of a piece with half-toned, non-vitrous enamels, pink and green being most common. This fashion belongs to an inferior type of art: it seems to have been suggested as a device to replace excellence of *pâte* and glaze. Sometimes, however, it is combined with decoration of the most elaborate and minute description.

The bottoms of *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* enamelled porcelains are always carefully finished on the wheel and glazed. Their *pâte* is fine and pure, but, in later specimens, seems a little more chalky and porous than *Kang-hsi* biscuit. Year-marks in seal-character are used in the great majority of cases. It may be noted also that the habit of gilding the rim of a piece does not appear to have been practised before the *Chien-lung* era, and even then was seldom resorted to in the case of very choice specimens. The custom became common in proportion as the potter developed a tendency to rely on decorative profusion rather than on technical excellence. Wares with polychromatic decoration manufactured during the present century are, for the most part, thus distinguished.

Special reference must be made to a very lovely and effective method of using egg-shell porcelain of the hard-paste type, namely, in the manufacture of lamp-shades or lamp-globes. Specimens of that nature were comparatively rare, their use being, of course, limited to houses of very wealthy persons. Numbers were found in the celebrated Summer Palace, at Yuen-min-yuen, which was rifled of its treasures and burned to the ground by the French and English invaders of China forty years ago. These choice examples of the potter's skill seem to have been ruthlessly destroyed by the ignorant soldiery. Occasionally, however, a similar piece may be procured from one of the great dealers in Peking. The biscuit is as thin as glass and the decoration is elaborate, generally consisting of a profusion of floral scrolls and figure subjects. The effect seen by transmitted light is very beautiful. These are probably the largest examples of egg-shell porcelain ever produced by the Chinese potter. They are found in the *Famille Verte* and *Famille Rose* types, and their technique is always excellent. It should be noted, however, that probably in no field have the keramists of recent eras been more successful than in the reproduction of these lamp-shades. Specimens from the *Taon-kwang*, *Heen-fung*, *Tung-chi*, and even later kilns, approach very closely to the masterpieces of *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung*, for which many of them have doubtless been, and are still, mistaken by Western collectors.

Western connoisseurs regard, as a feature of merit, the presence of metallic reflection, or iridescent tints, in the enamels of polychrome porcelains. Such effects are most usual in the case of green, yellow, black, and purple glazes. They are believed to be due to an admixture of lead in the enamel. There is no evidence that they were specially admired by the Chinese themselves, though when viewed by strong sunlight they certainly possess considerable beauty. Amateurs familiar with the faiences of Gubbio and Majolica attach conspicuous importance to this feature.

An interesting fact in the annals of Chinese keramists is that, while Europe sat at their feet and borrowed inspiration from them in all matters relating to the potter's art, they, in turn, devoted much effort and ability to imitating a certain kind of European porcelain, namely, the painted ware of Sèvres. So far as concerned decorative technique, they succeeded perfectly, though they do not appear to have paid any attention to the peculiar *pâte* of the original Sèvres, or to have detected that tenderness derived from its artificial composition constituted a special beauty. They were content to imitate the surface decoration, not even modifying the motives so as to render them Chinese, but frankly copying what they found on the French ware. Naturally their rich palette of exquisite *Famille-Rose* enamels enabled them to accomplish their purpose without difficulty. Indeed, if technical excellence alone be considered, the imitations excelled the originals. But the artistic skill of the French decorator was wanting in China. The Chinese potter, copying mechanically and without feeling or education, achieved a stiff transcript, palpably lacking grace or originality. Nevertheless the curiosity and novelty of such pieces strongly attracted Chinese dilettanti during the eighteenth century, and continue to attract them. The foreign collector finds them interesting as imitations, but can not admire them, and is astounded at the prices they command in Peking. For when, at rare intervals, a specimen, usually of insignificant dimensions, comes into the hands of any of the great bric-à-brac dealers, a figure is asked that bears comparison with the fancy values set upon the finest old Sèvres by Western connoisseurs.

Chapter VIII

PORCELAIN DECORATED OVER THE GLAZE (*Continued*)

SPECIAL VARIETIES

IN examining the subject of enamelled porcelains the wares hitherto discussed have chiefly been those in which the coloured decoration is applied to a white glaze. It remains now to notice other varieties, which, though belonging to the same species, possess characteristics that distinguish them as separate genera.

The most important of these is the *Héi-ti-pai-hwa*, the " Black Hawthorn " of Western collectors. This ware differs from the celebrated blue Hawthorn only in having a ground of uniform black, instead of clouded or tesselated blue, and in the fact that the white decoration is in opaque enamels over the glaze, instead of being simply reserved in the *sous couverte* colour. In both cases the decoration consists of plum branches and blossoms in white. The conception is worthy of high praise. Nothing can be softer or more graceful than pure white sprays and blossoms wreathed over a deep black glaze. Another branch of the same family is the *Héi-ti-wu-tsai*, or ware with five colours on a black ground. In this variety, green, purple, red, and yellow enamels are used to colour the leaves and stems of the plum trees, or to pick out the rocks from which they grow; the general character of the decoration does not differ, however, from that of the *Héi-ti-pai-hwa*. The earliest authenticated specimens of both wares alike date from the *Kang-hsi* era, and the manufacture was continued with excellent results until the close of the *Chien-lung* period (1795). These porcelains are prized in China. They appear to have been produced in limited quantities: good pieces are not procurable without considerable difficulty. The *pâte* alone guides the amateur to determine whether a specimen belongs to the *Kang-hsi* or the *Chien-lung* era — an unessential distinction, seeing that the productions of the two periods, in this class, are equally excellent. An important point is the quality of the black glaze. It should be glossy, uniform, and free from metallic tints. Very often, however, in specimens of the highest excellence, the black ground is pervaded, or broken, by a sheen of dark green. Imitations manufactured during the present century are always faulty in this respect. So valuable has the "Black Hawthorn" become, and so scarce is it in the Chinese market, that European potters recently thought it worth their while to forge some imposing specimens and send them to China for sale. The fraud was easily detected owing to the palpable inferiority of the imported pieces. For some unexplained reason fine specimens of "Black Hawthorn" often bear the mark of the *Ming Chêng-hwa* era, though they were plainly manufactured during the eighteenth century. There is no evidence that any such porcelains were produced by the *Ming* potters, unless the use of a spurious *Ming*-era mark may be regarded as a proof. It is not very likely that highly expert Chinese potters would have carried forgery to the extent of marking fine porcelains with the date of a period when nothing of the kind existed. Nevertheless, *Ming* specimens of this class are not now seen in the Chinese market.

The collector must be prepared to encounter many modern reproductions of the celebrated old "Black Hawthorn," and still more numerous imitations of porcelain having decoration in coloured enamels on a black glaze. To such specimens a general criticism applies, namely, that their *pâte* is comparatively coarse, their glaze thin and dull, and their technique altogether inferior. Still, they have deceived, and probably will continue to deceive, many an amateur. The collector whose knowledge is not sufficiently exact to guarantee him against mistakes, would do well to divest himself finally of the delusion that "bargains" may be found in these varieties of porcelain, or, indeed, in any other fine varieties. Their value is thoroughly understood by every dealer in China, and whenever comparatively cheap specimens are offered with assurances of genuineness, it may be taken for granted that they are not what their vendors allege them to be. In both China and Japan the imitator is very active at present. His essays in the former country are seldom such as to deceive a connoisseur of experience, but it is worth while to note an invariable feature of his procedure, namely, that he offers his pieces at prices mid-way between the value of genuine specimens and the cost of reproductions. That the collector is not invariably proof against such chicanery, may be assumed from its continued practice.

To black glaze of the same nature designs in gold were also applied. It has been shown that this fashion, as well as a similar application of gold pictures to *soufflé* blue grounds, were practised by the *Ming* potters. Both the early examples and those of the *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung* eras are open to the same criticism: the gilt designs, being insufficiently fired, present a crude appearance and are easily effaced by use.

Enamelled decoration on a red glaze is another variety which may be practically attributed to the *Kang-hsi* era (1661–1722). The conception of such a method belongs to the *Hsuan-tê* (1426–1435) potters of the *Ming* Dynasty, among whose authenticated productions there are little vessels moulded in the form of red fruits with green leaves and brown stalks. But the ware particularly alluded to here is covered with a soft, red, or ruby glaze — obtained from peroxide of iron — forming a ground for floral design, insects, and so forth in brilliant enamels. Its manufacture cannot be ascribed to a period more remote than the reign of *Kang-hsi*, and the very few specimens now procurable probably belong to the *Yung-ching* or *Chien-lung* era. Some choice pieces have their red surface broken by medallions enclosing beautifully executed designs in enamels of the Rose Family type. The ware occupies a high place among keramic productions. It is among those described by Chinese dealers as "Imperial porcelain," or *kuan-yao*. The specimens usually found are rice bowls, small vegetable dishes and cups. Vases are rare. On the whole these porcelains may be said to occupy the highest place among Chinese wares decorated with enamels over the glaze. The technique leaves nothing to be desired; the enamels, pure and brilliant, are worked out in the most careful manner, and owing to the thinness of the *pâte* the fine tint of the body colour shows faintly through the pearl-like glaze, producing an effect of charming delicacy. Many of the best specimens bear the mark of the *Yung-ching* era in blue *sous couverte*.

To the same class (*kwan-yao*) as the variety just described belong specimens having a rich black, or very dark green, ground, to which decoration in vitrifiable enamels is applied. These porcelains, like the *Kuan-yao* mentioned above, are rare, and examples are, for the most part, confined to bowls, cups and small plates. The black, or dark green, ground is sometimes finely chagrined, or covered with microscopic scrolls, and the enamels are of the highest quality. In some specimens the enamel design is reserved, in others it is superposed, but in either case the technique is perfect, indicating an extreme exercise of the workman's skill. The Chinese connoisseur values these porcelains highly. They nearly always bear a year-mark, the name of a factory, or ideographs indicating esteem.

More frequently found than either of the above varieties are specimens covered on the outer surface with red glaze — generally jujube or coral red — among which arabesques and scrolls are reserved in white. These porcelains often show admirable technique, but their decoration does not demand any very exceptional exercise of skill, and many of them give indications of having been manufactured for ordinary use. The best pieces may be identified by the lustre and richness of the body glaze, by the delicate tracing of the decorative design, by the care shown in pick-ing out the floral scrolls or arabesques — for which purpose the body colour is always used — and by the thinness of the biscuit.

The use of Indian ink for decorating porcelain above the glaze had its origin during the reign of Chien-lung. Such a method requires little comment. It is still largely practised, every variety of design being thus produced on a white ground. *Chien-lung* specimens are, however, easily distinguished by fineness of *pâte* and general excellence of technique. The same style of decoration is applied to a light green ground, with charming and artistic results.

Among the choicest and rarest glazes of Chinese potters yellow stands near the head of the list. Further reference will be made to it in the section on monochromes. It is noticed here only as a body colour for enamelled decoration. Its association with blue under the glaze after the "reserved" fashion is a conception already credited to the *Ming* keramists. The same style was successfully continued at the *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung* factories, the blue design — generally floral or arabesque — being applied *sous couverte* and the spaces between its parts covered with yellow enamel. In addition to yellow and blue, a third colour, light green enamel, was sometimes used in decorating specimens of this class. Another favourite and less uncommon type had green designs surrounded by yellow glaze. This style also dates from the *Chêng-hwa* era (1465–1478), for in the "Illustrated Catalogue" of H'siang a miniature box of that period is depicted having spiral scrolls in green on a yellow ground. The box is shaped like a *cash* of the time, and is said to have come out of the palace where it had been used by one of the Court ladies for holding rouge. Western collectors usually class pieces thus decorated among the "imperial wares" of the *Ming* dynasty, an appellation particularly unhappy in this case, inasmuch as genuine specimens of yellow and green porcelain dating from the *Ming* dynasty may be said to have no existence outside China. Such pieces as have left the country belong to the *Chien-lung* or *Kang-hsi* era. The yellow of the *Ming* dynasty appears to have been canary, or straw colour, varying slightly in tone, but always remarkable for shell-like softness and semi-transparency which even the *Chien-lung* experts evidently found difficulty in reproducing. Their yellow, surrounding either blue or green designs, is generally an opaque and somewhat heavy colour, though the decorative effect of the combination is undoubtedly beautiful. Large quantities of yellow and green porcelain were manufactured during the *Taou-kwang* (1821–1851) and *Hien-fung* (1851–1862) periods, and specimens of these dates are freely offered for sale by Chinese dealers who confidently refer them to the *Chien-lung* factories. Their comparatively hard colours, lustreless glaze, and chalky *pâte* should enable collectors to distinguish them without much difficulty. A rarer combination than any of these is that of yellow and purple, the latter colour (of the garnet type) being "reserved" amid the yellow ground. To this category also belongs yellow decoration on a red ground, of which some specimens dating from the *Chia-ching* (1522–1567) and *Wan-li* (1573–1620) eras are still to be found. The ground colour is not, however, an enamel but rather a pigment incapable of resisting the effects of wear and tear, and to be therefore classed with inferior orders of manufacture. The decorative design is usually dragons. They figure upon almost all choice porcelains of the *Ming* dynasty, especially on those destined for imperial use. Similar ware was produced with success down to the close of the eighteenth century.

Yellow designs with blue environment have already been noted as a *Ming* invention. Later epochs produced few specimens of this kind. Much commoner are pieces having mazarin blue grounds with rich enamelled decoration of the Rose Family type. On these the Chinese potter expended much care and was justified by the result. Ware of this nature scarcely deserves to be classed separately from that having enamelled decoration on a *soufflé* blue ground, though the two differ more in reality than in description. Fine pieces of mazarin blue with enamel decoration were produced as late as the *Chia-tsing* era (1796–1821) or even during the early years of Taoukwang's reign (1821–1851). It may be taken as a rule, however, that the younger the specimen the coarser its *pâte* and the less brilliant its glaze and colour.

Green was seldom chosen by Chinese potters as a ground for enamel decoration. Delicate *céladon* glazes from the *Kang-hsi* or *Chien-lung* factories, have brilliant red dragons or lizards coiled round the vase. These are rare, and deservedly prized. Belonging to the same era, but more common, are *céladons* having red peaches or pomegranates suspended in the glaze. Others again, not the least beautiful of the three, show flecks or spots of golden brown floating in their velvet-like glaze. Entirely distinct from this unique *céladon* colour is thin grass-green with metallic iridescence. This is found sometimes as a body-colour surrounding light purple (garnet) designs — generally dragons. Such porcelains are exceedingly rare. Chinese experts refer their origin to the *Chêng-hwa* era of the *Ming* dynasty, but there are no specimens to be seen dating from so distant a period. Green of less transparent character was also used as a field for arabesques, floral scrolls, and so forth, in gold. This fashion seems to have originated in the 18th century.

Chocolate glaze with floral designs in coloured enamels is another chaste and beautiful variety. This glaze, the *fond lacque* of French collectors, will be spoken of in a subsequent chapter. It does not appear to have been used as a field for enamel decoration before the close of the *Kang-hsi* era, for the enamels applied to it are always of the *Famille Rose* type.

The reader will have noticed that the potters of the *Sung* dynasty almost invariably took ancient bronzes as models for their choicest pieces, in respect of shape and decoration alike. This fashion was followed in a peculiarly realistic manner by the *Yung-ching* (1723–1736) experts, who conceived the idea of reproducing not only the shapes and designs of fine bronzes, but also their surface. In the early years of the *Ming* dynasty there had been manufactured in China an exceedingly beautiful bronze, pervaded by a golden hue and having its surface dappled with gold. The *Yung-ching* potters set themselves to imitate this and succeeded admirably. They produced solid tea-green fields, speckled with yellow so finely and uniformly that the latter colour seemed to pervade the whole, except where it was interrupted by golden flecks floating in the glaze. Round these pieces ran bands of diaper, arabesques, or floral scrolls in low relief, their raised portions covered with gold, strongly burned in. Sometimes the design was picked out with silver instead of gold. These porcelains are not at first sight very striking. The Western collector will probably prefer many other varieties of decoration. But as a *tour de force* the gold-flecked wares of *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* are most admirable. Choice specimens have an almost extravagant value for Chinese connoisseurs. In another variety of the same *genre* the patina of ordinary bronze is imitated with wonderful fidelity, the designs in relief being either gilt or glazed like the rest of the piece and having their interstices only in darker colour.

Enamel decoration was sometimes applied to a glaze mottled so as to resemble tiger's skin, and therefore called *Hu-pi*. This is a very uncommon style. It appears to have been employed in the manufacture of small pieces only, such as snuff-bottles and sacrificial cups. On these two classes of objects, collections of each of which have been made by Western amateurs, the Chinese keramist lavished most elaborate decoration. The gentleman of the Middle Kingdom regarded his snuff-bottle with much the same pride and affection as the European beau used to bestow on his snuff-box. The jade carver, the glass-cutter, and the potter devoted all their skill to the adornment of these little vessels. They were from two to three inches high, with cylindrical or flattened circular bodies, and from the stopper there projected into the interior a tiny spoon that served to carry the snuff to the nose. Monochromatic and polychromatic glazes, enamel decoration applied to a surface plain white, coloured in the various styles described above, carved in relief, reticulated, granulated, chagrined — it would be impossible to enumerate all the varieties of decorative device employed in the manufacture of these little objects. Fifty years ago they acquired historical interest in Europe, for Rosellini, in his "*I Monumenti dell' Egitto*," described one found by him in an Egyptian tomb, which was supposed to have never been opened before. On the strength of this evidence, supplemented by the subsequent discovery of three similar bottles in Egypt, Sir Francis Davis concluded that the manufacture of Chinese porcelain — for the bottles were of true porcelain and undoubtedly Chinese origin — dated as far back as the eighteenth century before Christ. Such a theory did not long survive. Attacked in the first place by M. Stanislas Julien, it was finally demolished by Mr. Medhurst, who showed that the inscriptions on the bottles were extracted from the writings of poets of the eighth century of our era. Exactly similar bottles were afterwards sent by Mr. Wells Williams from China, where they could be purchased in any porcelain store. Their presence in Egyptian tombs remains unexplained, and has no more historical significance than the discovery of Chinese ivory-white porcelain seals in an Irish bog.

Though scarcely worthy to be called a special variety, mention may be made of porcelain in the decoration of which one enamel only, deep emerald green, was employed. The designs were almost invariably dragons or phœnixes, supplemented by clouds, waves, or tongues of flame. Porcelains thus decorated are usually distinguished by careful technique. They are at once brilliant and restful. When their manufacture originated it is not possible to say with certainty, but it probably dates from the closing reigns of the *Ming* dynasty. No specimens older than the latter half of the sixteenth century have yet been authenticated.

The Chinese keramist showed much skill in the use of graving and moulding tools. Elaborate designs, incised or in relief, were constantly added by him to decoration in enamels. Perhaps the most delicate ornamentation of this kind is to be seen on lanterns of egg-shell hard-paste porcelain. These were employed after the manner of transparencies, and nothing could be softer or more brilliant than the effect of the enamelled pictures and reticulated or incised ornamentation seen by reflected light when the lamp was in use. Profuse decoration belongs chiefly to later periods of keramic development. The *Kang-hsi* potter depended on the brilliancy and purity of his enamels. His *Chien-lung* successor sought the aid of moulded, pierced, or incised designs, and in the nineteenth century the artist lost himself in confused elaboration. Hat-rests dating from the *Chien-lung* era show an extraordinary wealth of technical effort. The button on a Chinese official's cap being his badge of rank, he held his hat-rest higher than a Western lady holds her jewel-case. The keramist obeyed this foible by manufacturing cap-supports ornamented in the most unsparing manner, their embossed or latticed designs picked out with enamels and gold.

A curious and beautiful method of decoration, used sometimes alone, sometimes in conjunction with coloured enamels or blue *sous couverte*, consisted in cutting a design in the *pâte* and filling the excised portions with glaze only. There resulted a transparent pattern, resembling lace-work. Such a *tour de force* must have demanded great skill and care. Probably for that reason, as well as on account of the extremely perishable nature of porcelain thus decorated, specimens are exceedingly rare and highly prized. The design is generally of a formal character, as bands of diaper or star pattern ; but occasionally dragons or leaves and blossoms are thus treated. In America, porcelain with pierced ornamentation is commonly known as "Grains-of-rice-ware." In Japan it is called "*Hotaru-de*," or "fire-fly style." The precise date of its origin is uncertain, but there is every reason to conclude that it was not manufactured before the *Kang-hsi* era (1661–1722). Mr. A. W. Franks says that "in Persia, white bowls of a soft, gritty porcelain were made, which have rude decorations of the same nature, but there is no evidence to show in which country, China or Persia, such a mode of ornamentation originated." Numerous specimens from the workshops of the nineteenth century are to be met with ; but if the collector remembers to look always for a pure white, lustrous porcelain and accurately cut designs into which the transparent glaze is run with uniform precision, he is not likely to fall into error. These features are invariably absent in modern pieces, which show unevenness of surface and a distinctly marked tinge of green in the glaze of the pierced portions. In China this ware is called *Yen-ching-tou-hwa*.

Porcelain ornamented with white slip may be spoken of here as occupying an intermediate place between enamelled wares and monochromatic or polychromatic glazes. Chinese potters do not seem to have practised this method largely. They employed it chiefly in conjunction with the brown or coffee-coloured glaze called *Tsu-chin-se*, the *fond lacque* of

French collectors. Over this were moulded floral designs, scrolls, and geometrical patterns in white slip, the effect being at once rich and soft. A rarer variety has mazarine blue ground. In old porcelains of the latter class the tone of the blue is rich and pure, but in more modern pieces it passes into a species of slate-colour, or greyish blue. Many examples of the last variety are to be met with among the productions of the *Taou-kwang* and subsequent eras. They are generally coarse, clumsy porcelains, evidently manufactured for use rather than ornament. The white slip fashion of decoration probably had its origin about the close of the productive period of the *Ming* dynasty; that is to say, towards the end of the sixteenth century. It is certain that glazes of light golden brown or deep coffee colour were then in vogue, and these, with white slip decoration, are to be found on pieces that exhibit all the characteristics of later *Ming* porcelain.

It would be a hopeless task to attempt the enumeration of all the fashions developed by Chinese keramists in the decoration of enamelled porcelains. The principal types only have been mentioned above.

That Chinese decorative fashions were largely influenced by European intercourse from the *Kang-hsi* era downwards is beyond question. In the "Annals of Fu-liang," quoted in the *Tao-lu*, the various enamels and ancient porcelains produced or imitated at Ching-tê-chên in the eighteenth century are catalogued. It is there recorded that the Chinese potters "imitated European vases having figures chiselled or moulded," and that "in the manner of painting, or applying enamels to these vases as well as to other pieces, they copied closely the European style of art."

The same catalogue includes "vases decorated with enamels in the European style" (*Yang-tsai-ki*), and says that "landscapes, figures, flowers, plants, birds and quadrupeds were depicted on these porcelains with marvellous delicacy and perfection." When it is remembered what a large measure of imperial patronage was extended to the Jesuit missionaries in Kang-hsi's time, and how they were honoured as the representatives of advanced erudition, it seems natural that not European science only, but European art also, or at any rate the European art tendencies of the age, should have obtained some favour in the Middle Kingdom. Moreover, there were the markets of Europe to be supplied. Japan had adapted herself to their demand at Dutch inspiration, and Chinese keramists had not only Japan's example to stimulate them, but also the counsel of learned men who, although foreigners, were open recipients of the emperor's favours. The result may be traced in two directions. Decorative methods became more and more ornate, until they culminated in the infinite elaboration of the later *Chien-lung* porcelains. Looking back to the brilliant style of the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* period (1567–1620), it may, perhaps, be denied that foreign inspiration was needed to develop these into the exuberance of adornment with which their successors were loaded two centuries afterwards. But the difference is not one of degree only. For the dragons and clouds, the phœnixes, the sacred horses, the mythical beings, the waves, the fishes and the aquatic plants which chiefly furnished motives to the early keramist, were replaced in later times by elaborate diapers, rich scrolls, soft floral designs and graceful arabesques. Besides, the decorative enamels themselves underwent an alteration. It is a notable fact that all the principal colours of the "*Famille Rose*" porcelains, the lemon yellow, the ruby or crimson, the pink, or *rose du Barry*, and the brilliant black — differing essentially from the dull greenish black of the "*Famille Verte*" wares — are spoken of in the *Tao-lu* as "European colours." In fact, the distinct change of *genre* that occurred at the close of the *Kang-hsi* era, was largely due either to European inspiration or to some newly formed conception of European taste. Certainly the keramic decoration of the West two centuries ago had very few features in common with the contemporaneous keramic decoration of China. But the difference between the two was much less marked after the "*Famille Rose*" type made its appearance. The broken colours and half-tints of the latter had a marked affinity with European style, though the decorative designs chiefly employed might easily be mistaken for Japanese. Moreover, much direct copying of European models and designs took place at the request of foreign traders. Mr. A. W. Franks, of the British Museum, has studied this branch of the subject with his wonted care. In the fine collection presented by him to the nation, numerous specimens of Chinese and Japanese wares are included, betraying unmistakable evidence of foreign influence. His remarks on the subject are well worth quoting: —

> The earliest specimens modified to modern taste would naturally be anything made in China for Japan, or in Japan for China; next, the wares furnished to other Asiatic nations or to Egypt, and lastly those made for Europe.
>
> It would appear from Père d'Entrecolles and other sources that, in 1712, Japan was a purchaser of porcelain in China,

and he further mentions a little plate painted with a Crucifixion, which, he was informed, had been made to be smuggled into Japan at the close of the 17th century.

With regard to porcelain made for the Asiatic market, there are five specimens in the collection; two of these are saucers with Arabic inscriptions from the Koran, incorrectly written, and resemble a bowl and saucer in the collection of M. Charles Schefer, of Paris, which are inscribed with the name of the provost of merchants at Cairo.

Another dish has evidently been made for the Indian market. Two others are painted from Indian drawings which have been copied with great fidelity and care. Their Chinese origin is, however, betrayed by other portions of the ornaments. As we have already stated, M. Jacquemart has described a similar specimen as Indian porcelain.

From Père d'Entrecolles' letters it is clear that even as early as his time the great manufactory of King-tê-chên made specimens with foreign designs; for instance, "the porcelain," he says, "which is transported to Europe is generally made on new models, often of a strange form, and difficult to succeed in making, for the least defect the European [merchants] reject it, and it remains on the hands of the workmen, who cannot sell it to the Chinese because it is not according to their taste." He afterwards speaks of the models as having been sent from Europe. In his letter of 1722 he mentions that there had just been made large vases of three feet high and more, without the covers, which rose in the shape of a pyramid to the height of another foot. These pieces had been ordered by the merchants of Canton, who did business with Europeans, and had taken a great deal of trouble to make, as out of eighty only eight had succeeded.

In the History of King-tê-chên there are numerous notices of porcelain made in the European taste, and of vases painted with enamels in the European style, landscapes, figures, flowers, animals, etc., "of most delicate execution and marvellous perfection."

It is evident, therefore, that in China porcelain was made for exportation from designs furnished by Europeans, and if this was the case at King-tê-chên, we should naturally find that the factory at Shaou-king Fu to the west of Canton must have made still more. Abbé Raynal, in 1774, mentions this factory, and states that the porcelain known in France under the name of "porcelaine des Indes" was made there.

It is probable, therefore, that from these two factories, and especially from the latter, proceeded the numerous services for dinner and tea, differing altogether from the appliances of the same kind used in China. Many of these services have on them the armorial bearings of the persons for whom they were made. Even royalty patronised Chinese porcelain; portions of services made for Frederic the Great, and the royal families of Denmark and France, are in the collection. There seems also to have been a large service made for the Palace of the Swedish Kings at Gripsholm, the name of which is inscribed on the various pieces. The arms of families of rank are often found, and naturally those of wealthy merchants both in England and abroad. There is such a similarity of style in the arrangement of the decoration of much of this armorial china that there must have been some agent, either in England or at Canton, who supplied the designs and superintended their execution.

M. Jacquemart has ascribed to Japan what Abbé Raynal calls "porcelaine des Indes," our "India china," as well as the armorial specimens; but he has come to this conclusion on the most slender grounds; he argues that the Dutch India Company was the only important company which could have caused such a name to be given to its imports, and that that company traded with Japan. He has, however, quite overlooked the very important India companies of England, Sweden, and Denmark, which had a large trade with China, and that even the Dutch carried on a very considerable commerce with that country, using Batavia as their depôt. In the elaborate sale catalogue of the collection of M. Angrand de Fonpertuis, prepared by Gersaint of Paris in 1747, the Chinese and Japanese are generally spoken of as "Indiens." Moreover, the porcelain with armorial bearings is probably far more common in England than in Holland, and our country had no direct communication with

Japan. There are also many specimens which can be traced to families connected with China, or which are known to have been made to order in that country.

While, however, the "India China" has on one hand been attributed to Japan, it has on the other, and by a still more singular hallucination, been ascribed to Lowestoft in England.

There can be no doubt that there was a considerable manufactory of porcelain at Lowestoft, but this was of the usual English soft paste. The evidence of hard paste having been made there is of the most unsatisfactory kind; chiefly the indistinct recollection of persons not acquainted with the difference between hard and soft paste. A few specimens of white Oriental porcelain may have been decorated at Lowestoft, such as one belonging to Lady Charlotte Schreiber; but they must be rare, as most of the services of such porcelain with European decorations seem to belong to an earlier date. The supporters of the Lowestoft theory (which is now, however, nearly exploded) must have been embarrassed by the enormous number of specimens that exist, and by the occasional occurrence of dated examples too old for the so-called invention of hard paste at Lowestoft, such, for instance, as a Punch Bowl in this collection, dated 1769, eight years earlier than the supposed time of the invention. Why, moreover, should English painters, in executing European designs, give in the minor details those Chinese touches which at once reveal the Oriental artists? Had the subjects been Chinese such a proceeding would be natural.

The result has been that a class of Oriental porcelain formerly little cared for, and possessing no great merit, has been elevated in popular esteem, but it is to be hoped that in time it may find its level.

Mr. Franks is apparently mistaken in his inference as to the place of manufacture of some of these porcelains. The Kwang-tun (or Canton) potteries do not seem to have produced any wares of the kind. Their outcome, which will be spoken of later on, consisted of pottery and stone-ware, with monochromatic or polychromatic glazes.

Note must also be taken of Chinese porcelains decorated in Europe. About the year 1700, the Dutch keramists discovered the method of preparing some of the colours used for painting over the glaze. To employ these colours for decorating faience, such as that manufactured at Delft, would have been difficult, if not impossible. Accordingly the first essays were made with porcelains imported from China, offering a greater or less expanse of white surface for the exercise of the enameller's art. About the same epoch the *pâte-tendre* ware of Sèvres and the hard porcelain of Bottger making their appearance, these also began to be decorated with Delft enamels after Chinese fashions. Such essays were speedily followed by similar imitations from the factories in Italy, Saxony, Austria, and England. It then occurred to the merchants who had hitherto included Chinese decorated porcelains among their articles of trade, that a profit might also be realized by importing white porcelains for ornamentation at the hands of Delft experts. M. du Sartel, in his "Porcelaine de Chine," says that a regular business of this nature sprang up in 1705. The well-known keramist, Gerrit von der Kaade, and his *confrères* at Delft purchased quantities of Chinese undecorated porcelain, and adorned it with pictures sometimes of purely European *genre*, sometimes of Chinese type. The industry lasted until 1740, and during this interval of thirty-five years many specimens were produced, excellent alike in technique and artistic conception. Their enamels lacked the brilliancy of the "*Famille Verte*," and the continued solidity and delicacy of the

"*Famille Rose*," and their designs, even when copied directly from Chinese subjects, presented some feature that betrayed European origin. But they were undoubtedly fine porcelains of their class, and as Chinese year-periods or other marks were often added, a source of some confusion arose for the amateur. M. du Sartel has paid much attention to this branch of the subject. In his interesting work "La Porcelaine de Chine" he offers advice which well deserves to be remembered: —

> Arm yourselves, collectors of the future, with salutary and absolute distrust. Let your first care be, in every case, to clean the porcelain with a slightly acid solution in order to remove the dirt accumulated by the action either of time or of an unscrupulous hand. If the specimen is really old, this precaution will cause the enamels to resume all their pristine brilliancy, will unveil to you the cracks, the imperfections, the repairs craftily concealed by unfired decoration. How many specimens, and that two of the finest character, will you not then recognise as having had surface decoration applied to them by a second firing: blue grounds, uniform or mottled, enriched with designs in gold, or with reserved medallions enclosing polychromatic flowers, without counting vases the entire surface of which, originally white, is now red, green, or black?
>
> Then study the specimen closely, and you will see that the additions are badly adapted to the original design; that they cross each other and cover certain parts clumsily, and that the added fields of colour encroach upon the ancient contours. The stalks and the delicate strokes have lost their clearness, or are partially obscured by the ground colour. The painter charged with the task of applying these coloured grounds, or of filling the vacant spaces with flowers and new subjects, skilled though he may have been, has not been able to prevent these secondary colours from spreading during the stoving, and in places overrunning the less fusible Chinese enamels. An intimate union of the two

colours has not been produced, as would have been the case in a work executed at one time with enamels subjected to the same temperature.

The special esteem in which are held uniform or variegated grounds (as green, monochromatic or spotted with black) having enamelled decoration, has led to a species of secondary decoration, the first examples of which made their appearance lately. It consists not only in re-covering the white portions of the surfaces of old specimens, originally having a decoration of blue *sous couverte*, with paintings in enamels of the "*Famille Verte*" type — the enamels, which are very fusible, being obtained from oxide of chromium, and having a yellowish green tone, lacking in metallic reflections or iridescence — but also in applying this same colour to grounds originally blue, plain, or *soufflé*. This superposition of two colours, generally associating very badly, produces a character of spuriousness so peculiar and betraying such inferior quality, that the experienced amateur cannot be deceived by it. He knows, in fact, that a glaze coloured with oxide of copper run over cobalt-blue decoration applied to the biscuit would emerge from the kiln almost black, and that, in consequence, a green tint appearing over a perfectly developed blue could only be obtained by secondary decoration made with an extremely fusible colour, such as is not included in the Chinese keramist's palette.

If the general examination spoken of above should not suffice to clear away all sources of doubt, it will be necessary to undertake a more minute and perhaps more difficult study, which, however, will surely furnish proofs vainly sought for in the *ensemble* of the piece.

These proofs are to be found in the nature of the gold and of the colours employed by European painters in redecorating old pieces or copying them faithfully. Whatever is to be said of copies applies also to added decoration. Some pieces need not occupy our attention because, in their case, Oriental art has simply played the part of inspiring, and because they show of themselves a general *cachet* of Europeanism that precludes all possibility of error. In respect of others, however, the maker has designedly prepared his *pâte* and suitably tinted his glaze, while all engaged in the manufacture, from the potter to the painter, have made a point of servilely copying their model, not excepting the last *coup de main* given by the dextrous age-simulators of whom we have spoken.

It is here that washing with acid will effect marvels. It should be resorted to at the outset. Then the connoisseur should ascertain how the bottom of the base is made, remembering the Chinese potter's manner of finishing this part of a specimen. He should then seek for some place where, in consequence of an imperfection or absence of glaze, the *pâte* is entirely exposed. Examined with a magnifying glass this place should present the greyish and non-vitreous aspect of little grains in close juxtaposition, some of them sparkling in the light like mica; unless, indeed, there is question of very fine egg-shell, or semi-egg-shell porcelain, the fracture of which should bear a sensible resemblance to that of matter almost completely vitrified.

Passing now to the colours, it will be recognised that those of imitation pieces have neither the softness, nor the transparency, nor the iridescence, nor the metallic reflections of Chinese enamels, even when the imitator has been able to obtain a luminous appearance by washing in acids cleverly compounded. There are, besides, two enamels which the forgers never succeeded in obtaining, and which are happily found often in decorations of the Extreme Orient. The first is violacious brown, entirely transparent, used by the Chinese to paint branches, trunks of trees, and sometimes flowers or drapery. On imitation pieces this colour is dull, non-transparent, altogether brown, or carmine suggesting the presence of dirty blue. The second of these enamels is that which, obtained from chloride of gold, gives tints of rose colour or deep carmine. On Chinese porcelains this enamel is always brilliant and of remarkably pure tone. On porcelains made in Europe, on the contrary, it is always dull, violaceous, almost claret-like.

As for enamelled grounds over the glaze, thick and uniformly coloured coats of which, having often great intensity of tone, the Chinese potter applies to the surface, our painters replace them by easily recognised grounds of badger brown.

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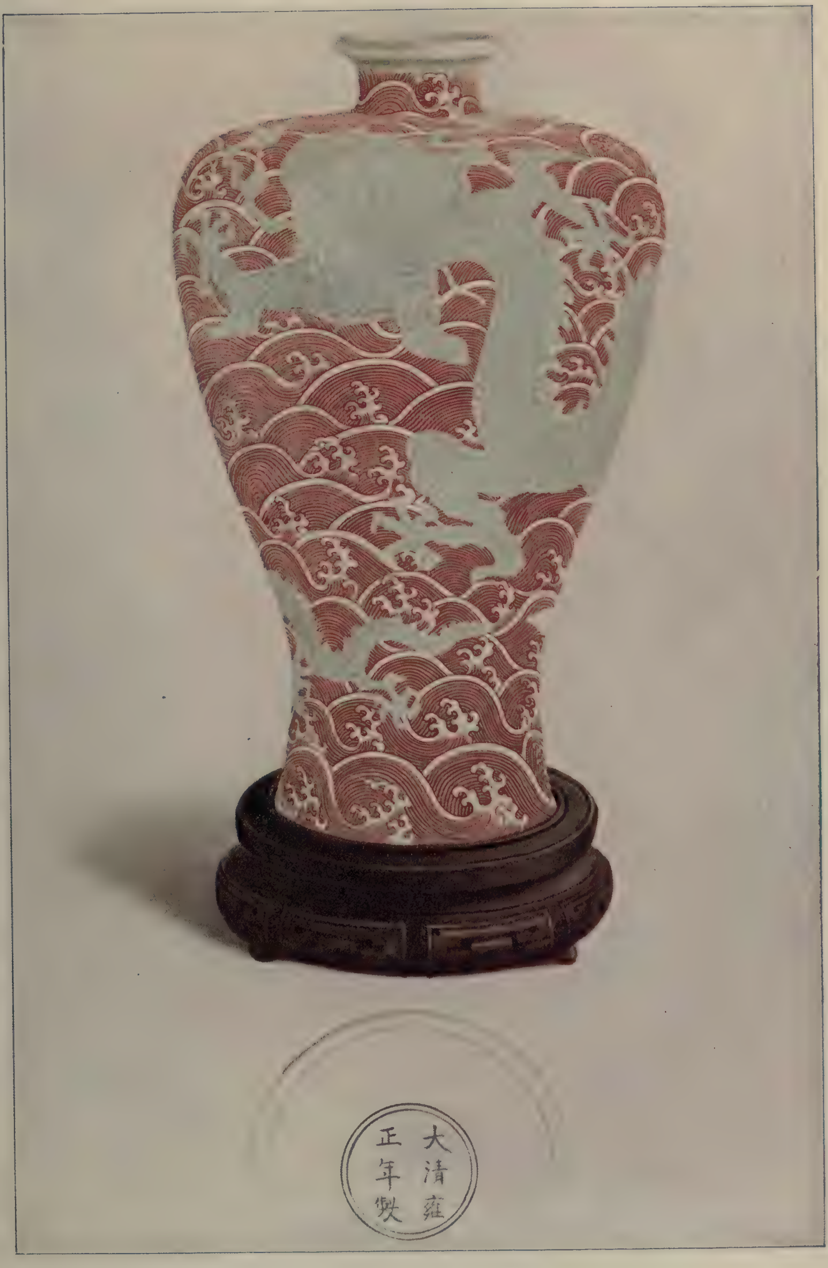
YUNG-CHING PORCELAIN, DECORATED WITH RED UNDER THE GLAZE.

(See page 170.)

As for enamelled grounds over the glaze, thick and uniformly coloured coats of which, having often great intensity of tone, the Chinese potter applies to the surface, our painters replace them by easily recognised grounds of badger brown.



大清雍正年製

Finally, if careful note is taken of what we have said about want of solidity on the part of gold applied to porcelains in China and Japan, it will be understood that most of the old specimens thus ornamented ought to be now entirely deprived of their gold decoration. This peculiarity offered to modern painters a large field which they have not failed to exploit. They had only to recover and follow the half-effaced marks in order to renew the original decoration. Herein it is the faults of the original gold that enable us to pronounce apocryphal pieces presenting too fair an appearance. In fact, if the painter, learning that a piece may safely be exposed to the low temperature of the gilding furnace, has recourse to the preparations employed in our studios, his gold decoration will be solidly fixed, brilliant, and capable of being burnished with an agate. If, on the contrary, he is content to use gold dust mixed with varnish and applied without caloric, he obtains a metallic tone resembling more closely the Chinese gold, but having thick, heavy outlines, which, moreover, may be entirely removed by scratching with a knife or by washing in an acid solution.

It need scarcely be noted that this obliteration of the gold decoration is not invariably observed in the case of old specimens. Much depended, of course, on the degree of care with which they were kept. Occasionally pieces are found to which their owners attached sufficient value to handle them so tenderly and preserve them so scrupulously that much of the gold decoration remains as fresh as it was when it emerged from the kiln. M. du Sartel concludes his analysis thus: —

In fine there remains to be noticed one more variety of secondary decoration which is of some interest. All amateurs are acquainted with a certain type of blue-and-white vases, generally cylindrical in form. Those that we desire to note here have their necks decorated originally with a slight, narrow border of pattern, their bodies being occupied with large figures that stand nearly as high as the vase. . . . These figures, boldly designed, nearly always evince veritable talent on the part of the decorator. In order not to distract the eye from the principal subject painted by him with the finest blues of his palette, cleverly graded, he has refrained from ornamenting the shoulder or the lower part of the vase, and has left the space about the figures open. The only fault of this particular type is that it is not sufficiently rare. Collectors are therefore content to possess one or two specimens of it, leaving the others in the stores of bric-à-brac dealers where they accumulate, vainly awaiting purchasers. These are the vases, or at least some of them, that we are surprised to see reappear clothed with new decoration. The neck is now adorned with a triple border in brightly coloured enamels. The shoulder is occupied by a large zone of iron red or green with reserved designs, and above the figures runs a border of scallops or false gadroons in yellow, blue, or green enamel, such as we see on fine specimens of the *Famille Verte*. Finally, the long robes and accessories of the figures are no longer simply blue, but show a more or less happy addition of gold.

The question has been raised whether these vases should be regarded as a really ancient variety, rare specimens of which, jealously preserved up to the present by Chinese amateurs, had suddenly made a triumphant and unexpected appearance among us. Ought we not rather to recognise the cylindrical vases spoken of above, the low price of which added to the possibility of exposing them to the temperature of the enameller's furnace, indicated them as fit subjects for the crafty skill of our secondary decorators. The latter doubtless transformed some of them, but there can be little question that others were transformed in China, in obedience to orders and directions sent from Europe. So far as we are concerned, we believe that we have seen both kinds, though we are sure that we have never met with any really ancient.

Imitators, knowing well that no decoration over the glaze, however fine, ranks with decoration *de grand feu* in the eyes of amateurs, have not failed to turn their attention to paintings on the biscuit (under the glaze). In respect of these, the results hitherto obtained with cobalt blue or copper red, applied *sous couverte*, are so imperfect that there is no danger of confounding them even with the commonest porcelains of China and Japan.

The reader will observe that no detailed note has been taken of enamelled porcelains manufactured during the ninteenth century. The fact is that, with the exception of pieces dating from the early part of the century, the collector will find few specimens possessing decorative or artistic merit. The products of the *Chia-tsing* era (1796–1821) are often scarcely distinguishable in technique and style from those of the *Chien-lung* workshops. But from the close of this era and the commencement of the *Taou-kwang* period (1821–1851), a steady deterioration set in, marked, as might be expected, by the profuse use of pigments and easily applied enamels. Thenceforth a prevailing trick of the decorator was to cover large portions of the surface — frequently the whole interior of a piece was thus treated — with a thick coat of lustreless green or pink, generally roughened, more or less irregularly, like the skin of an orange. Much gilding and unsparing application of ill-assorted half-toned pigments became the fashion, and it apparently ceased to be possible to produce a pure white, lustrous porcelain. The greenish or bluish tinge pervading the glaze of these modern wares, the chalky appearance of their *pâte*, the irregularity of their surface and the generally clumsy nature of their manufacture, are tests which the amateur should have no difficulty in applying. In proportion, too, as the merits of former potters ceased to be imitable, the transparent device of employing false year-marks came into vogue, so that these periods of decadence may be ascribed a great majority of the specimens distinguished by *Hsuan-tê*, *Chên-hwâ*, and *Chia-ching* dates. The only porcelains of modern (*i.e.* 1830–1860) manufacture at all are likely to deceive are those with coloured crackle and comparatively sparse enamelled decoration, and the so-called "medallion bowls," that is to say, bowls whose outer surface is covered with lustreless green, yellow, pink, or red pigments, laid over floral scrolls or arabesques engraved in the paste, and interrupted by medallions containing enamelled or painted designs. These bowls probably represent the best achievement of the *Taou-kwang* and subsequent potters, and in their own inferior fashion doubtless merit admiration.

It must be noted, however, that during the past ten years Chinese potters have succeeded in producing porcelains elaborately decorated with enamels, partaking of the character of both the "*Famille Verte*" and the "*Famille Rose*" types. Loaded with ornament, in which formal and pictorial styles are hopelessly confounded, these pieces nevertheless have enamels so brilliant and so cleverly applied that the amateur may possibly be deceived if he estimates them by their surface decoration alone. Examination of the *pâte* where it is exposed at the base of the specimen, should at once remove all doubt. It will generally be found artificially discoloured, and its rough, granulated character can be detected by the least experienced collector. Naturally, if inferiority of *pâte* were the only fault to be laid to the charge of these modern reproductions, they might still possess some claim to admiration. But they are bad in every way, above all in their lack of either artistic feeling or decorative instinct. The surface of the vase has been taken simply as a field for displaying bright enamels, and even if these occasionally approach the transparency and purity of their *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung* prototypes, the general effect is confused and unsatisfactory. It is probable, however, that some of these imitations have found their way into American collections, for they have been exported from the East by dealers of repute.

A rare and very highly prized variety of "jewelled porcelain" is decorated with enamels showing all the properties of glass. From the *Ming* era the Chinese acquired great skill in the manufacture of cameo glass, using it chiefly to make snuff-bottles, writers' vases, bowls, and other small objects. Towards the close of the *Kang-hsi* era their keramists conceived the idea of employing glass, or a slightly modified form of it, in the same way as they had hitherto employed vitrifiable enamels for over-glaze decoration. Opinions may differ about the artistic success of this new departure, but as a *tour de force* it was certainly very remarkable, and from Chinese connoisseurs it elicited applause. Few specimens are procurable, and a very high value attaches to them in China. Occasionally a porcelain vase is found having body-glaze and decoration such that its resemblance to a specimen of cameo glass is striking.

Before dismissing the subject of porcelain decorated with enamels over the glaze, notice must be taken of the "Three-coloured Ware" (*San-tsai-ki*). This, as its name indicates, is distinguished by paucity of coloured enamels, green, yellow, and red only being employed, with occasional addition of blue *sous couverte*. Green is the dominant colour, the others usually occupying a more or less subordinate place.

The porcelain dates from the *Chêng-hwa* era of the *Ming* dynasty, and its manufacture was continued until the end of the *Kang-hsi* period. It came from the workshops at Ching-tê-chên. No special interest attaches to it. There is, however, another ware classed by some connoisseurs as *San-tsai-ki*, but not really belonging to that family, from which it differs primarily in the nature of its *pâte* — not hard porcelain, but pottery or stone-ware — and essentially in the manner of applying the decoration, which covers the whole surface, leaving no portion of the biscuit exposed. In jars and vases of this faience large portions of the surface are often pierced in reticulated patterns with peonies, dragons, or lions suspended among the reticulation, the intervening spaces having diapers or scrolls in relief. The raised parts as well as the designs suspended in the reticulation are enamelled in green, turquoise-blue, white, maroon, yellow, or purple, some one of which colours, generally turquoise-blue or green, is employed to cover the rest of the surface also. The enamels are opaque and comparatively dull, and the technique is usually of second-rate quality. The choicest specimens of this ware are without reticulation, their decorative effect depending entirely on contrast of rich colours. A frequent and highly artistic type has a bold scroll of peonies in relief, in white or yellow enamel on a purple or turquoise-blue ground. Still more elaborate examples have figures of mythical personages among conventional clouds, with bands of diaper and scroll pattern above and below; green, yellow, white, and purple enamels are employed for this raised decoration, while the body colour is strong turquoise-blue or peacock green. Such pieces are decorative and attractive. In appraising their merit the amateur has to consider before everything purity of colour, richness of glaze, and careful technique. Any muddiness in the tone of the enamels or roughness of surface is a distinct mark of inferiority, and the same may be said of clumsy technique, though the collector must not look for a very high degree of finish in any ware of this class.

It will thus be seen that though both porcelain and faience are included by some connoisseurs in the "Three-coloured" ware, the two are essentially different in appearance. The porcelain, in fact, really belongs to the *Famille Verte*, from typical examples of which it is only distinguished by paucity of coloured enamels. The term *Famille Verte*, as already explained, is of European origin: it has no existence in China. The amateurs of the Middle Kingdom recognise the distinctions of *Wu-tsai* and *San-tsai* (five colours and three colours), but both types of ware may not improperly be included in the "Green Family" by those who prefer the latter nomenclature. Porcelain of the *San-tsai* variety was manufactured at Ching-tê-chêng, but the faience or stone-ware mentioned above, came from kilns in the neighbourhood of Peking, in the province of Shansi. According to the records, its manufacture in the latter district commenced in the seventh century, but nothing is accurately known about the products of so remote a date. Not until the close of the *Yuan*, or opening years of the *Ming*, dynasty is there anything upon which a verdict may be founded, and even then the specimens are of comparatively insignificant character. A limited number of these are preserved in Japan where they have always been higly valued, though erroneously attributed to Cochin China. Their *pâte* is hard white stone-ware, its outer surface always covered with enamels of rich colour, while to the inner is applied a partial coat of thin paint-like grey glaze. In nine cases out of every ten these specimens take the form of small boxes used in Japan to hold incense. Sometimes they are round, with the top rudely moulded into the shape of an ox or a stag; sometimes they are made in the semblance of a bird, a badger, or a blossom. The enamels are green, yellow, purple, and mahogany red. The purple varies from the colour of ripe grapes to that of light muddy claret dusted with dark speckles. The green and yellow are rich and lustrous, and the mahogany red has a peculiar wax-like appearance, not seen in any other enamel. Scroll patterns or other designs in relief enter almost invariably into the decoration, the technical finish of which is usually more or less rude. In a manuscript work, entitled *Kogo-zuye* (illustrations of incense boxes), compiled by a well-known Japanese virtuoso forty years ago, ten celebrated specimens of this faience are depicted. The majority of them are grotesque in conception. One is in the shape of an archaic badger with yellow limbs, purple face and breast, and green body. In another the artist has modelled a purple stag lying on green scrolls and diapers, and in another a claret-coloured carp plunges among yellow waves. The redeeming features of such pieces is the richness and lustre of their coloured enamels, indicating high technical ability. They are referred by Japanese connoisseurs to the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, and there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the estimate; for though, as has been said, the Japanese are mistaken about the place of the ware's origin, collateral evidence shows that they have kept tolerably accurate records of the dates when it came to their country. It need scarcely be said that the specimens of this highly decorative ware familiar to Western collectors belong to later periods than the curious little *kogo* so much treasured in Japan. These large brilliant, though somewhat crudely finished pieces date chiefly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though several are undoubtedly as old as the *Wan-li* (1573) or even the *Chia-tsing* (1522) era of the *Ming* dynasty. The difference between specimens from the factories of these eras and those from the *Kang-hsi* kilns is scarcely appreciable. The glazes of both are equally pure, lustrous, and brilliant, and their *pâte* equally hard. In general technique, however, the advantage is with the *Kang-hsi* ware. In proportion as later periods are reached, the biscuit becomes soft and friable, and the enamels lose their glossiness and depth.

Chapter IX

MONOCHROMATIC GLAZES

WHITE

AMONG the wares belonging to this section the most important is *céladon*, but enough has already been written about this beautiful though not duly appreciated representative of Chinese keramic skill.

The earliest white porcelain showing any fine technical qualities was the *Ting-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty. This, as already seen, was not hard, translucid ware of the type commonly called porcelain in the West; it had soft *pâte* and though very thin, was not transparent. Something of its opaqueness was due to the nature of the glaze, for even bowls of fine *Ting-yao* so fragile as to seem capable of being crushed between the fingers, refuse altogether to transmit light. The glaze, though perceptibly thicker than the covering applied to *porcelaine dégourdée* by the European process of absorption, has not more body than a coat of thin cream, to which, indeed, its soft yet solid appearance and warm tone may not inaptly be compared. Whether owing to original excellence or to skilled manipulation, the porcelain earth of the *Ting-yao* shows qualities that fully explain the esteem in which the ware was held by old-time connoisseurs. It has a *pâte* as fine as pipe-clay, as tender as vellum, and withal so elastic that good specimens appear to spring under pressure. The Catalogue of H'siang shows that the potters of the *Sung* dynasty generally took ancient bronzes as models for white *Ting-yao*, and that they accurately copied not only the shapes of these but also their decorative designs, incised or in relief. Such models were naturally best adapted to vases, censers, libation-cups, and so forth. When there was question of bowls or plates the potter chose ordinary shapes and ornamented them internally with sprays of leaves and blossoms, floral scrolls, or two fishes, incised or in relief, leaving the exterior plain. The glaze was not crackled in *Ting-yao* proper, but in the *Tu-Ting-yao*, or *Ting-yao* pottery, an inferior and comparitively clumsy production, crackle of medium size always appeared. It need scarcely be said that genuine specimens of *Ting-yao* dating from the *Sung* dynasty are virtually unprocurable.

It has been shown that the production of northern *Ting-yao*, or *Pai-ting*, ceased in the year 1126, and that the ware was thenceforth represented by the Southern *Ting-yao*, or *Nan-ting*, manufactured at Nan-chang in Kiang-si. Nan-chang and Ching-tê-chên were virtually synonymous. The keramic industry in this, its metropolitan, district progressed steadily without much reference to changes of dynasty, and when the *Yuan* Mongols became masters of the whole empire, the production of *Ting-yao* at Ching-tê-chên went on as before. Thenceforth, however, the porcelain was called *Shu-fu-yao*, or "imperial ware," to mark the fact that its chief destination was the Court. The materials employed in the manufacture of this *Yuan Shu-fu-yao* being identical with those employed for the *Sung Nan-ting*, and the potters being the same, it is evident that the wares could have differed only in decorative features, if they differed at all. H'siang, in his "Illustrated Catalogue," referring to the specimen of *Shu-fu-yao* depicted there, says that "in its paste and form, in the colour of its glaze, and in the engraved design, it is altogether like a *Ting* piece." Hence the conclusion must be that the *Nan-ting* of the *Sung* dynasty and the *Shu-fu-yao* of the *Yuan* (1279–1360) represented no points of appreciable difference.

Entering the *Ming* dynasty an important distinction has to be noted. Researches show that until the close of the fourteenth century hard-paste porcelain was scarcely manufactured at all in China. A few specimens rudely decorated with blue under the glaze are attributed to the *Sung* and *Yuan* keramists; but though, if their genuineness be admitted, they demonstrate that the ability to make hard-paste porcelain was not wanting in those early days, they at the same time prove that, comparatively speaking, little care was bestowed on its manufacture. From the *Yung-lo* era (1403–1424) of the *Ming* dynasty, however, not only did hard-paste porcelain become one of the choice products of Ching-tê-chên, but also it reached a stage of expert manufacture incompatible with any hypothesis of sudden development or newly acquired knowledge. H'siang says that the white *Yung-lo* porcelain was made after the *Yuan Shu-fu-yao*, itself an indistinguishable reproduction of the *Sung Ting-yao*. It might be concluded, therefore, that the *Yung-lo* ware also belongs to the soft-paste variety. But here precisely the connoisseur has to make a distinction. Though from the *Yung-lo* era downwards hard-paste porcelain takes its place among the choicest keramist productions of China, the manufacture of soft-paste porcelain loses nothing of its vogue. In the case of ware decorated with blue *sous couverte*, it has been shown that though the variety upon which, from the *Hsuan-tê* (1424) era to the close of the eighteenth century, the potter lavished all the resources of his art — the variety alone held in really high esteem by Chinese virtuosi — had soft and nearly opaque *pâte*, yet large quantities of beautiful and attractive hard-paste porcelain were also produced. So it is with the white *Yung-lo* ware referred to by H'siang: soft-paste facsimiles of the celebrated *Ting-yao* and its later representative, the *Shu-fu-yao*, were successfully manufactured, but there also made its appearance a hard-paste porcelain so excellent and so far in advance of anything previously seen in the same line, that it became and has since remained the keramic feature of its era. This is the white egg-shell porcelain familiar to American and European virtuosi. Its great thinness and transparency suggest the idea that the porcelain clay has been entirely removed and the glazing material alone left. It was accordingly termed *To-tai-ki*, or ware of which the body (*tai*) had been removed (*to*). Concerning this remarkable effort of technical skill, the *Tao-lu* contains the following information: — "The thin vases called *To-tai-ki* originated during the reign of the Emperor Yung-lo. At that time people prized vases which were comparatively thick and which are to-day commonly known as *Puan-to-tai*, that is to say, pieces of which the *pâte* has been only half (*puan*) removed. There is another variety, thin as bamboo-paper, which is distinguished from the last by the appellation of *Chin-to-tai*, or true (*chin*) *To-tai*. This species was originally produced in the Imperial Factory during the *Chêng-hwa* era (1465–1487), and subsequently in private workshops throughout the *Lung-ching* (1567–1572) and *Wan-li* (1573–1619) eras. During the two last reigns the porcelains most esteemed were those of the *Tan-pi*, or 'egg-shell,' variety, which were of uniform tint, a pure white. These did not at all resemble the porcelains of later times of which the majority had decoration in blue *sous couverte*. The cups of pure tone and brilliant white of the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* eras were infinitely superior in thinness and beauty to those decorated with blue." It would appear from this extract that the manufacture of very thin hard-paste porcelain dates from a period fifty years later than the *Yung-lo* era. But there is evidence to show that the author of the *Tao-lu* erred in this matter. He wrote, it will be remembered, in 1815, whereas H'siang, otherwise a more trustworthy authority, compiled his illustrated catalogue nearly two hundred and fifty years earlier. H'siang in fact lived less than a century after the *Chêng-hwa* era, while Ching was separated from that era by three centuries and a half. Now H'siang in his Catalogue illustrates a cup of white *Yung-lo* porcelain, appending to the picture a description that the ware was as thin as paper and that it was called *To-tai*. He adds that several similar cups were extant in his time (second half of sixteenth century), and that they were highly appreciated by collectors of taste. By Chinese connoisseurs of the present day also it is unanimously held that the true *To-tai-ki* dates from the *Yung-lo* era. Bowls of the ware are preserved by them with the greatest care. They have a peculiar shape, the sides not being curved, but sloping rapidly to the base, which is very small in proportion to the circumference of the upper rim. The porcelain is exceedingly thin and delicate, and the pure white of the glaze offers an immediate contrast to the opaque mellow tone of the *Ting-yao.* These specimens have decoration either incised or in relief, the usual designs being dragons or phœnixes (or both together) among clouds, or floral sprays. So fine is the technique that in the case of incised decoration it is often necessary to look through the piece by sunlight in order to see the design. On the bottom of genuine specimens, inside the bowl, the year-mark (*Ta-Ming Yung-lo nien chi*) is always found, either engraved or in relief, in seal character. The glaze, though smooth and shining, does not present the solid glossy or oily appearance so often seen in choice Chinese porcelain. This point is worthy of note, for it constitutes a distinguishing feature between the *Yung-lo* white porcelain and that of the *Kang-hsi* and *Chien-lung* eras of the present dynasty.

In addition to the fact that the student is henceforth confronted by soft-paste and hard-paste porcelains, between which careless or ignorant writers fail altogether to distinguish, he finds now another source of confusion in the name applied to the new *To-tai-ki.* The *Yuan* potters' imitation of the *Sung Ting-yao* was called "imperial ware" (*Shu-fu-yao*), and to the *Yung-lo* hard-paste porcelain the appellation *Kuan-yao*, or "official ware" was given. It is necessary, therefore, to warn amateurs against confounding the *Kuan-yao* of the *Ming* and *Tsing* dynasties with the similarly called and similarly written *Kuan-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, which, as shown in a previous chapter, was *céladon* and *céladon* only. From the beginning of the fifteenth century until the present day, the term *Kuan-yao* has been applied in China to all choice wares which had the honour of being specially manufactured for use in the Palace.

The manufacture of thin white porcelain of the *To-tai-ki* class continued from the *Yung-lo* era onwards. *Hsuan-tê* (1426–1435) potters were not less successful — doubtless the Imperial factory remained in the same hands during both the Yung-lo and the Hsuan-tê reigns — and the great porcelain period of *Chêng-hwa* (1465–1488) contributed many fine specimens. It was owing, in all probability, to the copiousness of production during the last named era that the author of the *Tao-lu* fell into his misconception as to the ware's history. There are no recognised features by which, in the absence of year-marks, the connoisseur can determine the period of any specimen of *To-tai-ki* manufactured between 1493 and 1620. Nor indeed is it of the least importance that such distinctions should be drawn, since all the surviving specimens of *To-tai-ki* dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are of first-rate quality. Towards the close of the *Wan-li* era (1574–1620) the manufacture came to an end. In a book called the *Tao-shuo*, there is quoted a portion of the "Memoirs from the Pavilion for Sunning Books," which were written at the end of the *Ming* dynasty (about 1640). It says that, on the occasion of the new moon and full moon fairs at one of the great Buddhist temples in Peking, the rich men used to throng to look at the old porcelain bowls exhibited. "Plain white cups of *Wan-li* porcelain were several taels of silver each, and those with the marks of *Hsuan-tê* or *Chêng-hwa* twice as much and more" (translated by Dr. Bushell). Already therefore an interval of less than half a century had sufficed to deprive the Ching-tê-chên potters of the skill exercised by their *Wan-li* predecessors.

Among the *Wan-li* experts was one Hao Shih-chiu, famed for his exquisitely delicate white porcelain. He could make wine-cups weighing less than the forty-eighth part of an ounce, and he was also able to imitate the white *Ting-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty so perfectly that the connoisseurs of his time failed to distinguish the reproduction from the original. Pieces of his surviving now might evidently pass for *Sung* ware among any virtuosi. The *Tao-lu* tells a curious story illustrative of his remarkable ability. One day he called at the residence of an important official called Tang, and begged permission to examine an ancient tripod of *Ting-yao* which the latter possessed. The tripod was produced. Hao took its measure accurately with his hand. Then he copied the form of the design on a paper which he concealed in his sleeve. Returning immediately to Ching-tê-chên, he passed six months there, and then repaired a second time to Tang's *Yamên.* Admitted to Tang's presence, Hao took from his sleeve a tripod and said: — "Your Excellency is the possessor of a tripod censer of white *Ting-yao.* Here is a similar one of mine." Tang was astonished. He compared the new tripod with his own precious piece and could detect no difference. Even the stand and cover of his own tripod fitted that of Hao exactly. The potter made no secret of the fact that his was only a modern imitation, and ended by selling it for sixty pieces of silver to Tang, who placed it in his collection as a companion to the *Sung* tripod. A few years later, a brother virtuoso, who was paying a visit to Tang, saw the tripods and was so enamoured of them that he dreamed of nothing else. Ultimately, after much entreaty, he persuaded Tang to part with Hao's tripod for a sum of fifteen hundred pieces of silver.

This anecdote is interesting, as showing not only the enormous value attaching to specimens of fine and rare porcelain three hundred years ago in China, but also the fact that the soft-paste white *Ting-yao* was successfully copied at the close of the sixteenth century. Indeed, although there is no direct evidence to that effect, the student may conclude with tolerable confidence that there was produced at Ching-tê-chên throughout the greater part of the *Ming* dynasty a soft-paste porcelain resembling *Sung Ting-yao* almost to the point of absolute identity. The one discernible difference is that the *Ming* keramists did not stove their bowls and cups in an inverted position, as was the practice at the Ting-chou factory. Thus in the older specimens the upper rims are unglazed, which defect is usually hidden by a metal ring. In Japanese collections may be seen not a few choice pieces resembling in all respects the *Ting-yao* and *Shu-fu-yao*, but probably produced, for the most part, during the *Ming* dynasty.

The true *Ting-yao*, as already stated, is not crackled. But fine, strongly marked crackle constitutes a principal feature in another variety of soft-paste porcelain dating probably from about the *Chêng-hwa* era. In thinness and quality of biscuit this ware closely resembles the *Ting-yao*, but its glaze is more lustrous and distinctly darker in colour. Small bowls of it often have their outer surface fluted so as to resemble the calyx of a flower. Others have floral designs cut in the biscuit so that the edges of the pattern are depressed and the centre appears to be in relief. This ware is a great favourite with Japanese collectors who call it *Nyo-fu*, according to their pronunciation of Kiang-nan, the province where it was manufactured. Like the *Ting-yao*, it never has any marks of date or factory.

It is necessary now to turn for a moment to the Kiang-nan workshops. The *Tao-lu* states that of the six factories existing at an early period in the province of Kiang-nan, five were devoted to the manufacture of white porcelain. Of these the most important was at Su-chou. It had its origin during the *Sung* dynasty and continued active until the end of the seventeenth century, from which time its products ceased to deserve a place among art objects. Its soft-paste porcelain, according to the *Tao-lu*, resembled the celebrated *Ting-yao*, and was in large demand, especially when genuine *Ting-yao* of Pechili began to grow scarce. Su-chou pieces then passed for true *Ting-yao*, but the author of the *Tao-lu* pronounces them to have been decidedly inferior. The second factory, at Sz'-chou, also began to work under the *Sung*, and produced soft-paste porcelain of the *Ting-yao* type, its quality, however, relegating it to a lower rank than that assigned to the ware of Su-chou. The third factory was at Hsuan-chou. It worked throughout the *Yuan* and *Ming* dynasties, producing soft-paste white porcelain of considerable merit. The fourth factory is that at which the potter Pêng (*vide Ting-yao*, Chapter III.) worked during the *Yuan* dynasty. Its outcome is said to have supported comparison with true *Ting-yao*, except that the glaze lacked lustre. Indeed, good specimens of *Pêng-yao* are described as bearing such a close resemblance to the *Ting-yao* of Pechili that only skilled connoisseurs could detect the difference. Finally there is the factory at Pai-tu-chin (village of white clay) where a ware called *Siao-yao* manufactured originally turning the *Sung* dynasty, obtained a large share of public favour. Representative pieces had thin white *pâte* and brilliant glaze. They were of similar colour to *Ting-yao* and did not much yield to it in excellence of technique. According to a work quoted in the *Tao-lu*, this factory, in the days of its prosperity, had about thirty furnaces, gave employment to several hundred potters, and was under the orders of a director-general.

Kiang-nan was not the only province where soft-paste porcelain of the *Ting-yao* type constituted a staple of keramic industry. In the southern province of Kiang-si a factory in the Ki-chou district followed the same line. Brief allusion has already been made to this factory in the chapter on *Sung* wares. There were five kilns, all engaged in producing white and purple porcelains of the *Ting* kind. Among the experts Shu-Hung and his daughter, Chiao, developed special skill. Their pieces commanded high prices and ranked almost on a par with true *Ting-yao*, though they are said to have been thicker and coarser. The factory ceased to work in the second half of the thirteenth century. Ware of the same character was also manufactured at Yang-chiang in Kwang-tung, and subsequently, at Swatow in the same province.

There is no doubt that as the lapse of time rendered connoisseurs less familiar with the distinctive features — often insignificant — of the porcelains eminating from these various factories, the term "*Ting-yao*" came to be applied in a sense wider than the limits of strict accuracy permitted. It will be well, therefore, for the collector to confine the appellation to specimens having soft *pâte*, thin biscuit, rich but not brilliant glaze of creamy white or slightly buff tinge, and ornamentation incised or in relief. He may further take it for granted that though small examples — round plates or pyramidal bowls — of early *Ting-yao* may be found at rare intervals, large pieces are practically non-existent. When there is question of the latter, they may be unhesitatingly referred either to the later Ching-tê-chên potters, or to the factories of Kiang-nan, Kiang-si, or Kwan-tung. The Kwan-tung pieces, now extant, are all comparatively heavy and coarse; Chinese virtuosi place them in the *Tu-ting* (Ting pottery) rank. The characteristic type is a large vase or ewer, decorated with a scroll of lotus or peony in high relief, and having paint-like creamy glaze of varying lustre and uneven thickness, its buff colour often showing tinges of blue. Crackle, though not an essential feature, exists in the great majority of cases and is usually large and irregular. The biscuit is close, grey stone-ware, too thick and heavy to be properly classed with *pâte tendre*, but not infrequently approaching that type, especially in well manipulated examples. Among the early specimens of *Kwang-yao* there were doubtless many that deserve to be spoken of in higher terms. But if they survive they are no longer taken account of by connoisseurs. On the other hand, the old soft-paste porcelains of Kiang-nan stand on a high plane of technical skill. The variety spoken of above — that known in Japan as *Nyo-ju* — with its oily, lustrous glaze, thin *pâte*, fine crackle, designs in bas-relief, and warm greyish buff colour, is very charming. Another characteristic variety deserves special mention. It has thin and strikingly light biscuit covered with lustreless glaze that shows a distinct tinge of buff and so closely resembles the shell of an egg as to proclaim at once its maker's intention. There is no ornamentation, either incised or in relief, and the ware depends entirely on the softness and delicacy of its general appearance. Judging by the care evidently bestowed on the manufacture of these pieces, it is impossible to class them in an inferior grade of keramic objects, though they may not rank as high as the *Ting-yao* proper. In Japan they have always been esteemed for the sake of their perfect adaptability as flower vases: their quiet mellow surface consorts admirably with brilliant as with sober blossoms. The most characteristic of these vases are without crackle, but occasionally the glaze is covered with net-work of very fine veining. When this is the case the *pâte* has usually greater weight and thickness. Indications pointing with any distinctness to the age of the soft-paste Kiang-nan porcelains are difficult to fix. That examples of the work of the *Sung* or even of the *Yuan* potters survive only in the smallest numbers, goes without saying. The majority of the best specimens now extant are probably from the hands of *Ming* or early *Tsing* experts. The best test of age is that they should fulfil the general rules applicable to good porcelain as to fineness and thinness of biscuit uniformity and lustre of glaze, and careful technique.

According to the author of the *Tao-lu*, the potters of Ching-tê-chên imitated only the *Fang-ting-yao*, or rice-flour variety of *Ting-yao* — that is to say, the *Nan-ting* type of the ware. It would be more proper to say that they confined their manufacture to this class, for, as may easily be conjectured, the developments and improvements introduced by them scarcely justify the term "imitators." Throughout the *Ming* dynasty and during the eras of *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* they manufactured numerous pieces some of which were facsimilies of *Sung Ting-yao*, while others resembled it only in the nature of their *pâte* and the colour of their glaze. Among three beautiful varieties of this later *Ting-yao* it is difficult to assign the preference. In one the biscuit is so thin that a vase twelve or fourteen inches high only weighs a few ounces. It has boldly crackled glaze — the crackle running in generally parallel lines — and its colour varies from cream grey to light buff. Incised in the biscuit are delicate designs, usually dragons grasping jewels among flames, flying phœnixes, or scrolls of peonies. The *pâte* is reddish brown, as fine as pipe-clay, and the technique is in all respects perfect. It is impossible to be deceived in these specimens. They commend themselves at once to the most ignorant amateur. In another variety the biscuit, though of the same quality and fineness, is considerably thicker, in order to carry decoration in relief. The designs employed in this case are always purely conventional, copied for the most part from ancient bronzes, and so accurately cut as to resemble impressions in wax. The glaze is crackled, but the crackle differs from that of the last mentioned variety in being round or angular. In lustre the advantage is on the side of the specimens having thicker biscuit, but even in the most highly finished examples of the latter, waxiness rather than gloss or oiliness is to be looked for. Further, the connoisseur will readily recognise that a shining glaze would be incongruous on vellum-like egg-shell ware with incised designs, such as the soft, thin *Ting-yao* of the first class. The third kind is not the least remarkable and is certainly the rarest of the three. It resembles the second in the solidity of its biscuit and in its sharply cut decoration in relief, but its surface, instead of being crackled, is granulated like the skin of a lime. Very graceful shapes were chosen by the modellers of this choice porcelain, and it is impossible to speak too highly of the technical skill shown in its manufacture. The connoisseur's difficulty is to determine the date of a specimen, for inasmuch as only the best experts in each epoch set themselves to produce such ware, age and excellence do not necessarily go together, Examples having the mark of the *Yung-ching* era (1723–1736) are in every respect comparable with those referred to in a much earlier period. It should be observed, too, that as a rule only ware of the second variety described here has year-marks, and that, like the surface decoration, they are in relief.

Although in the three choice varieties here described, the glaze is of the *Fan-ting* type — that is to say, yellowish grey or light buff, with a soft, waxy appearance — specimens also occur having a pure white and glossy surface. These are remarkable for the brittleness of their glaze, which, if once chipped, easily crumbles away.

Passing now, once more, from soft-paste to hard-paste porcelain, it appears from the *Kang-hsi* era downwards many beautiful and valuable specimens were produced. Unfortunately Chinese writers seldom make any distinction based on the nature of the *pâte*, though Chinese connoisseurs attach much importance to this point. In the list of porcelains requisitioned for Imperial use in the year 1529 the following occur under the head of "White Porcelain":—

Rice Bowls with crested sea-waves faintly engraved under the glaze.

Wine Cups and *Libation Cups* with engraved phœnixes and cranes.

Tea Cups of oval section with foliated rim.

Tea Cups with dragons engraved under the glaze.

Wine Cups of pure white enamel.

Wine Pots of vase form with spouts, of pure white.

Dishes of pure white.

Wine Vessels of oval form with crested sea-waves faintly engraved under the white glaze.

There is nothing in the text to show whether these pieces had hard or soft paste, and the same looseness of phraseology disfigures the *Tao-lu's* classifications. It is pretty certain, however, that from the *Lung-lo* era downwards pure white porcelain vessels, such as rice-bowls, wine-cups, tea-cups, and so forth, were chiefly of the hard-paste variety. The delicate *To-tai-ki* and the feather-like cups of the great *Wan-li* expert Hao Shi-chiu, belonged to this category, although, as has been seen, Hao devoted much of his skill to reproductions of *Sung Ting-yao* also. The wave-pattern spoken of in the Imperial Requisition quoted above was a favourite design for incised decoration on hard-paste ware. The lines of the waves were engraved as fine as silk, and the effect of curling crests was obtained very happily. These *Ming* manufactures did not show a strikingly lustrous surface. Smooth, polished, and highly finished, they were nevertheless without the unctuous gloss so highly esteemed in wares of a more solid character. In fact connoisseurs still exacted some resemblance to their favourite and venerable type, the *Ting-yao*. The epithet *Tan-pi* (egg-shell) applied to the surface of the most esteemed white porcelain of the sixteenth century, excellently describes its peculiarly soft delicate texture. And if in colour also the hard-*pâte* porcelain be likened to a hen's egg, the appearance of the *Fan-ting-yao* may not inaptly be compared to that of an ostrich egg.

It is on coming to the *Kang-hsi* era (1661) that the connoisseur begins to find a wealth of beautiful white hard-paste porcelain. For at least fifty years the manufacture had virtually ceased, and such specimens as remained from epochs prior to 1600 had become precious as gems and, on the whole, not less scarce. Were there any certain indication of the causes responsible for the cessation of the manufacture, there would also be a clew to the technical secrets of these choice wares. But the reason usually assigned — political troubles — is evidently insufficient. The quotation given above, from the "Memoirs from the Pavilion for Sunning Books," shows that a keen demand for the ware existed among the public, and that its production would have been a lucrative business independently of official patronage. In the *Tao-lu* it is stated that the best porcelain clay used by the Ching-tê-chên potters came from a locality to the east of the factories; that the supply was exhausted towards the close of the *Ming* dynasty, but that subsequently new beds were discovered in the same neighbourhood. This temporary failure of supply may account for a break in the manufacture of choice hard-paste porcelain. As for the soft-paste type, the composition of its biscuit is matter of conjecture. A special kind of clay found at Ta-u-ling, and employed chiefly for glazing material, is said to have been often used for making biscuit by imitators of old-time ware, one reason for its selection being that it gave a peculiarly strong, durable *pâte.* This would indicate that the old-time ware referred to was of the *céladon* type, which is wholly different from the *Ting-yao.* As already seen, M. d'Entrecolles' account of biscuit made, wholly or partially, from steatite, indicates a product closely resembling the soft paste of blue-and-white *Kai-pien* ware. The same remark applies to *Ting-yao* porcelain, but unfortunately this point remains obscure. It is at all events certain that the potters of the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* eras yielded nothing to their *Ming* predecessors in their knowledge of materials and their skilful methods of combining them so as to produce both hard and soft *pâtes* of perfect quality. Their hard-paste white porcelain may be conveniently classified according the nature of its decoration — incised or in relief. In the choicest type of incised decoration, the designs — usually dragons, phœnixes, or floral sprays — are sunk in the biscuit so as to be almost imperceptible except by transmitted light. The glaze is of dazzling purity and lustre, conveying the impression of snow-white oil. The paste is fine as pipe-clay, and the timbre is sharp and clear. Nothing distinguishes this beautiful porcelain so much as the peculiar richness and unctuousness of its surface. The slightest symptom of an air-bubble, of pitting, of discontinuity, or of dulled lustre is a fatal mark of inferiority. This class of ware occurs chiefly in bowls, libation cups, and plates: the nature of the decoration is not well suited to vases in which the effect of transmitted light would be lost. In a second and not so choice type of incised decoration the design is engraved as though with the point of a fine style. The surface of specimens of this class does not show such velvet-like smoothness and lustre as distinguish the glaze of the fomer variety, but, on the other hand, the decoration is more elaborate: it generally covers the whole surface, floral scrolls being a favourite subject. Large specimens are to be found in this class, graceful vases and capacious ewers. The thinner and lighter the biscuit, the choicer the piece. It is evident that more translucid and less unctuous glazes are especially adapted to these large pieces, but the amateur may take it as a rule, that, in all such wares smoothness, polish, and purity of surface are essential marks of excellence. A watery glaze tinged with blue or green, unevenness of surface, grits in the *pâte*, and thick biscuit represent inferior workmanship and a degenerate era.

As to decoration in relief a distinction should be noted between soft-paste and hard-paste porcelain, namely, that in the former the designs often have clean-cut edges and angles, like chiselled metal, whereas in the latter everything is round and soft. Not the least pleasing type of hard-paste porcelain thus decorated has the designs formed either with the same clay of which the biscuit is made, or traced in a whiter substance — steatite or fibrous gypsum. When either of the latter materials is used, the decoration shows through the glaze like a tracery of white lace, while the glaze itself, in choice specimens, is of velvet-like smoothness and lustre. Decoration in relief where the porcelain *pâte* itself is used to trace the design usually covers the whole surface in the form of floral scrolls and bands of leaves. Much of the beauty of such ware depends on delicacy of technique and lustre of glaze. Pieces satisfying a high standard in both these respects fully deserve the admiration lavished on them. They are not uncommon in China, but really fine examples have always commanded high figures. Not infrequently the glaze of a specimen otherwise excellent lacks lustre and brilliancy without acquiring compensatory softness. Such pieces cannot, of course, be placed in the first rank of their kind.

Foreign collectors often apply the term *Ting-yao* to hard-paste porcelain with incised decoration. After what has been written above, the reader need scarcely be told that this is a misnomer. Hard-paste porcelain with incised decoration is known as *Chu-hwa-ki* in China; a name which, though so far as its meaning goes it might reasonably be used of any ware thus decorated, has come to be applied distinctively to the hard-paste variety. Vases with decoration in relief are known as *Tui-hwa-ki*.

M. d'Entrecolles, speaking of steatite as a substance employed for decorating porcelain in bas-relief, says that after the mineral has been purified it is made into little bricks. The workman then dissolves one of these in water, forming a liquid of some consistency. Into this he dips his brush, and traces various designs upon the surface of the *pâte*, which is then left to dry and subsequently covered with glaze. "When the porcelain is stoved," M. d'Entrecolles adds, "these designs appear of a different white from the body of the piece. The effect produced is as though a subtile vapour had crept over the surface. The white of steatite is called 'ivory-white.'" With regard to the use of fibrous gypsum, the same writer says:—"Designs are traced upon porcelain with fibrous gypsum as well as with steatite, a white different from that of the body of the piece being thus obtained. There is, however, one peculiarity about the gypsum, namely, that before use it must first be subjected to the action of fire. After this it is pounded and thrown into a vessel of water, which is stirred, and the scum that rises to the surface is gradually removed. Ultimately there remains a pure mass, which is used in the same fashion as steatite." It will of course be understood that the designs traced with these substances vary in degree of relief. Sometimes they stand out prominently from the surface; sometimes they appear as a snow-white satiny tracing.

A rare and beautiful method of treating the surface of hard-paste white porcelain is to channel portions of the biscuit in diapered designs and leave the sunken parts of the pattern unglazed. This troublesome *tour de force* is seldom found upon large pieces. Occasionally it occurs in combination with blue decoration *sous couverte*.

In yet another highly esteemed and uncommon variety the surface is cut into lattice-work of marvellous delicacy. Either this reticulation alone suffices for ornamentation, or it is employed to fill the spaces between medallions having decoration in blue *sous couverte* or white figures modelled in high relief. Sometimes gilding is applied to these figures. Curiously enough specimens of porcelain thus reticulated generally take the form of little cups, which could never have served for drinking purposes: they were intended to contain ashes for setting up sticks of incense.

In addition to lustre of glaze, purity of colour, and accuracy of technique, the quality of the biscuit is a useful criterion of period in hard-paste white porcelain. The *Chien-lung pâte*, though fine and close, is softer and more chalky than the *pâtes* of the *Kang-h'si* and *Yung-ching* eras. On the whole, the tests of excellence for hard-paste white porcelain are easily applied. The features of good specimens — thinness, lightness, velvet-like gloss of surface, pure white colour, and dexterous finish — can be appreciated by any one.

Marked distinction is to be drawn between the white porcelains hitherto discussed and the well-known "Ivory White," or "Blanc de Chine," of Western collectors. Confusion has hitherto existed with respect to this latter variety even among the most painstaking and well-informed European connoisseurs. The Ivory White was originally produced at Tê-hwa, in the province of Fuh-kien, and was consequently called *Tê-hwa-yao*. According to the *Tao-lu*, the factory was opened during the *Ming* dynasty, so that it dates no farther back than the second half of the fourteenth century. Like the celebrated wares of the *Sung* and *Yuan* potters, the *Tê-hwa-yao* owed its beauty to texture and tone of glaze rather than to thinness of biscuit or to surface decoration. The *pâte* is greyish white, close in grain, very hard, and carefully manipulated. The glaze is of wonderful merit. In good specimens it is at once satiny, lustrous, and indescribably soft. The white is of a peculiar delicate creaminess, which, combined with a pinkish tint, conveys such an impression of ivory that the porcelain may be identified at once by its European name. Many of the specimens are perfectly plain, relying entirely on the charms of their glaze. Others have incised designs, generally very sketchy in character; and others, again, have decoration in high relief, such as branches of plum, dragons, phœnixes, and so forth. The last variety is the commonest and least valuable, though some pieces of it possess merit. Perhaps the most beautiful and rarest kind is that in which the usually faint pink of the glaze deepens into a distinct tone of rose. The engraved designs, though often indistinct, were never intended to be viewed by transmitted light, as was frequently the case with the hard-paste egg-shell porcelains of Ching-tê-chên. Libation-cups, cylindrical vases, and tripod censers were favourite forms with the Tê-hwa potters, but they enjoyed high reputation as modellers of figures of the goddess *Kwan-yin* and other Buddhist divinities, as well as of seals with handles shaped into the Dog of *Fo*, the *Kylin*, and similar mythical monsters. In the *Tao-lu* it is said of the factory:—"Most of the cups and bowls manufactured there have their edges slightly turned back. The ware is called *Pai-tzu*, or white porcelain. It has great lustre and polish, but is very thick. Some specimens, however, are thin. The statuettes of Buddha are extremely beautiful. It is at *Tê-hwa* that we find at present the ware called *Chien-yao*, but it bears no resemblance to the ancient ware of the same name." *Chien-yao* is, in fact, the name by which Ivory-white porcelain is known to-day in China. It will be remembered that the same term, *Chien-yao*, was originally applied to one of the most remarkable wares of the *Sung* Dynasty, the characteristic variety of which had lustrous black glaze with silver lines. No two keramic productions

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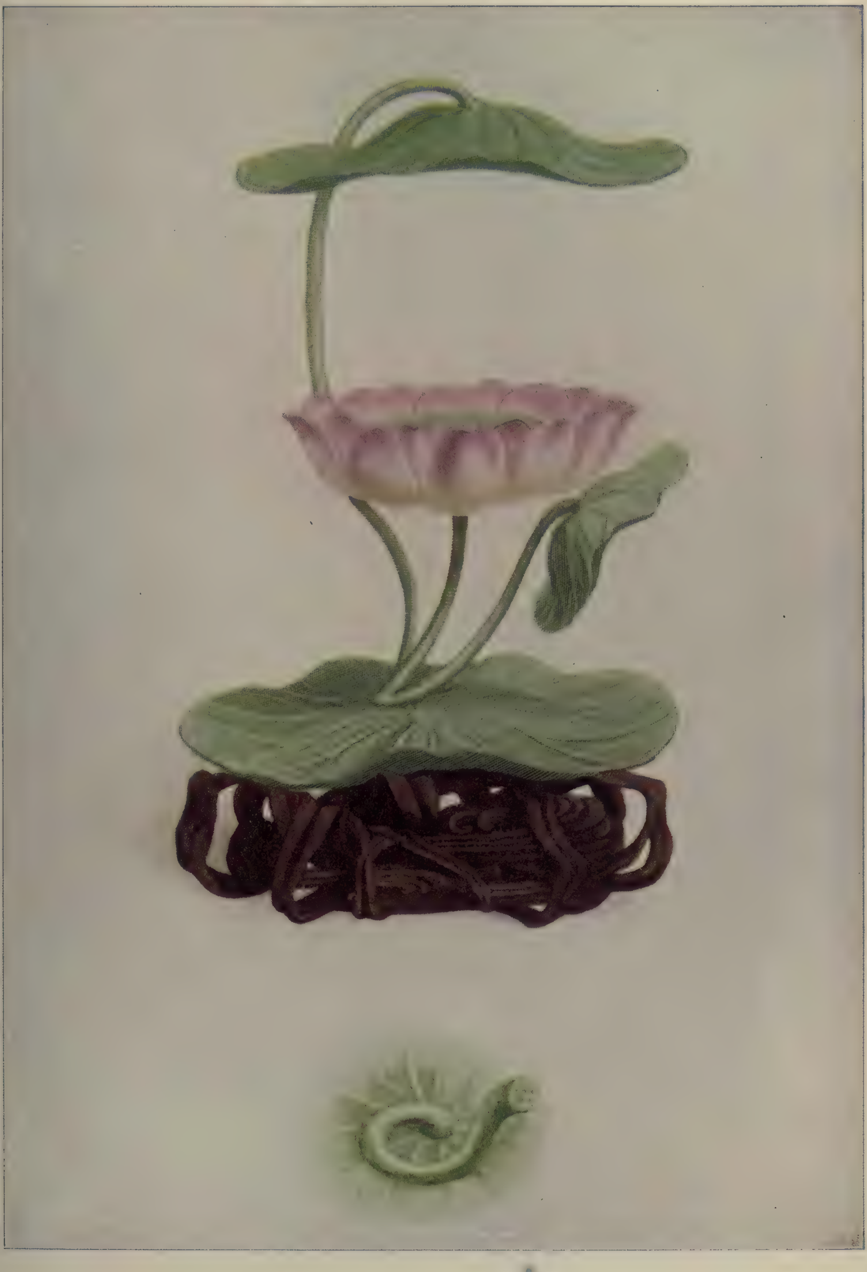
LOTUS-FLOWER LAMP OF *CHÊNG-HWA*, ENAMELLED PORCELAIN.
(Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 7 inches. (See page 190.)



could be more unlike than the *Chien-yao* of the *Sung* period — which is opaque stone-ware — and the *Chien-yao* of the *Ming* and *Tsing* Dynasties — which is white, translucid porcelain. Both, however, derived their name from the district of their manufacture in the province of Fuh-kien, and on the revival of the keramic industry at that place under the *Ming* Emperors, it doubtless seemed natural that the later ware should be called *Chien-yao*, irrespective of the complete dissimilarity between it and its earlier namesake. By way of distinction Chinese connoisseurs often speak of the Ivory White as *Ming Chien-yao*. Its production, commencing under the early *Ming* Emperors (*circ.* 1400), was continued with success until the latter half of the eighteenth century. It appears to have been then virtually discontinued, to be revived, however, in recent years. A considerable number of specimens are now produced, and palmed off upon unwary collectors. But the amateur can easily avoid such deceptions if he remembers that in genuine pieces of Ivory White the ware is always translucid when held up to the light, a property which, if not entirely absent, is only possessed in a comparatively slight degree by the modern product. The general quality of the glaze and the technique of a piece should be sufficient guides, but if any doubt remains an examination of the base of the specimen will probably dispel it. In the old ware the bottom of a vase or bowl, though carefully finished, is left uncovered, whereas the modern potter is fond of hiding his inferior *pâte* by roughly overspreading it with a coat of glaze.

Ivory-white porcelain has at all times been more highly esteemed outside China than by the Chinese themselves, though they, too, set no light value on good specimens. In Japan it was from the first a strong favourite. It seems to have come to that country originally from Korea, an accident that led the Japanese to attribute it to Korean factories and to call it "*Haku-gôrai*" or "Korean White." The error still survives. Curiously enough, when Christianity began to take root in Japan, at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, statuettes of *Kwan-yin* (Japanese, *Kuan-non*) in Ivory-white porcelain were used as substitutes for images of the Virgin Mary. A remarkable collection of these statuettes, blackened by fumes of incense, is preserved in the Imperial Museum of Antiquities in the Ueno Park, Tôkyô, where it forms part of an assemblage of Christian relics. In some cases the goddess carries a baby in her arms; in others, she is accompanied by two or three children. Thus associated with children she is known as *Kwan-yin*, the Maternal, and from the association bold inferences have been deduced by tracers of Buddhistic and Christian affinities. It need scarcely be observed that a demand in Japan for this form of *Kwan-yin* would soon have created a supply.

Solid, beautiful, and manufactured in the very province where stood Ch'üan-chou-fu, the principal mart of China's foreign commerce, the Ivory-white *Chien-yao* naturally went abroad in considerable quantities. In the Dresden Collection there is preserved a little plate, said to be of this ware, with uncut jewels, rubies, and emeralds, let into the paste in gold filigree. The piece is marked below with the seal character *fuh*, in blue under the glaze. It is said to have been brought by a crusader from Palestine in the twelfth century. There are two difficulties about this theory. First, Ivory-white porcelain was not manufactured in China so early as the twelfth century; secondly, the *Tê-hwo-yao* or *Chien-yao* is never marked with blue under the glaze. It is most improbable that the plate really came into the Dresden collection in the manner described or that it is a genuine specimen of *Chien-yao*. Nothing is so misleading as tradition where objects of art are in question. In the temple of Benten at Hakone, in Japan, the priests show among other precious relics a flute said to have been used by the celebrated warrior Yoshitsune, in the twelfth century. Of Ivory-white porcelain, it is in all respects a beautiful example of keramic skill. That the flute never belonged to Yoshitsune and could not have been manufactured until two centuries after his death, are facts scarcely admitting of dispute. Japanese antiquarians, though mistaken as to the orign of Ivory-white porcelain, are correct as to its age; they say that no specimens of it reached their country before the close of the fourteenth century.

Choice examples of soft-paste white porcelain often have the year-mark of their period in relief, though they are not necessarily so distinguished. Hard-paste white porcelain as a rule has no marks of either date or factory. A notable exception, however, is the *Yung-lo To-tai-ki*. Genuine bowls of this beautiful ware always carry, on the bottom of the inner surface, the ideographs *Yung-lo* or *Yung-lo Nien-chi*, in seal character in bas-relief. The hard-paste white porcelain of the present dynasty, if marked at all — which is exceptional — has the mark painted in blue *sous couverte*.

Before dismissing this part of the subject, a ware must be noticed one variety of which belongs to the white monochromatic class, while another should be included with ware decorated over the glaze. It is the *Tsu-chou-yao*, so called from a place of the same name originally included in the province of Hônan but now within the Southern boundaries of Pechili. The ideograph *tsu*, used in writing the name of this place, being identical in sound and shape with the ideograph signifying "porcelain," some confusion has resulted. This point need not be elaborated. The *Tsu-chou-yao* is undoubtedly one of the old-time wares of China. There is no record of the exact date of its origin, but the factory was certainly active during the *Sung* dynasty, at which time, according to the *Tao-lu*, its reputation stood so high that choice specimens commanded higher prices than even *Ting-yao*. They are further said to have closely resembled the latter ware, but from what is known of their *pâte* it was heavier and slightly coarser than that of the Ting chou product. The glaze, too, was thinner and less lustrous, but for the rest the two wares may have been easily confounded in the palmy days of the Tsu chou potters. From the *Ming* dynasty downwards, however, the *Tsu-chou-yao* deteriorated in quality of *pâte* and became more or less coarse stone-ware, degenerating finally into faience of a common and unattractive type. Collectors are very unlikely to meet with fine examples of pure white *Tsu-chou-yao*. If any such exist, they have ceased, apparently, to be identifiable. The best known variety of the ware has decoration over the glaze in pigment ranging from black to light brown. The designs are always of archaic or conventional character — rudely traced floral scrolls, dragons, phœnixes, or mythical animals. A special interest attaches to the ware owing to the esteem in which it has always been held by Japanese virtuosi, who, imagining it to be of Korean origin, give it the name of *E-gorai*, or " Painted Korean." A few specimens, in the forms of geese, ducks, or Dogs of Fo, intended for use as censers, show clever modelling, but on the whole the *Tsu-chou-yao* has little interest for Western collectors. In very rare instances vitrifiable enamels were sparsely employed for surface decoration, the colours being confined to green and red. Large quantities of the ware are now produced in the shape of coarse utensils for household use.

Chapter X

MONOCHROMATIC WARES (*Continued*)

RED

AFTER *céladon* and soft-paste white porcelain, the choicest of all monochromes are red. In European and American estimation, indeed, this order is reversed; red glazes are placed in the very highest rank, and it is not to be denied that there are excellent grounds for the verdict, since among the choice reds of China are to be found the grandest and most decorative colours ever produced in the pottery furnace. Many Chinese collectors also hold reds in superlative esteem, and grudge no price to acquire a fine specimen.

There is much uncertainty with regard to the time when red glazes were first produced. The *Tao-lu*, quoting from a memoir called the *Chiang-ki*, says: — "Porcelain vases of Ching-tê-chên were named *Jo-yu*, that is to say, 'Jade of Jo-chou.' They could hold their own against the true *Ting* vases in red porcelain." To this quotation the author of the *Tao-lu* adds the remark: — "It is thus seen that among *Ting* porcelains some were red. Brown and black *Tings* were also made, but the red *Ting* (*Hung-ting*) and the white were alone esteemed at the time (*Sung* dynasty)." The author, it will be observed, had no other evidence than a solitary quotation from an ancient memoir to support his dictum that red glazes were manufactured so far back. On the other hand, H'siang, himself a collector, apparently a keener connoisseur than the writer of the *Tao-lu*, and living, moreover, three centuries nearer the times of which he wrote, makes no mention of red *Ting-yao*, though he carefully enumerates the varieties of that beautiful ware which were most highly esteemed in the sixteeenth century. The student must be content, therefore, to leave this point unelucidated so far as the *Ting-yao* is concerned. Turning, however, to the *Chün-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, it appears that whether pure red monochromes were produced or not, the use of red in the glaze was undoubtedly well understood. H'siang, speaking of this ware, says that " of the colours used in the decoration none excelled the vermilion red and the aubergine purple." The typical *Chün-yao*, familiar to modern collectors from genuine *Sung* specimens or later, though not inferior, imitations made at Ching-tê-chên, had a glaze of exceedingly delicate red, finely flecked with *clair-de-lune*, and cannot, therefore, be strictly classed among monochromes. In a variety of the same ware, made at Ching-tê-chên during the present dynasty, and supposed to have had its prototype in the *Sung Chün-yao*, there is a glaze called *Hai-tung-hung*, in consequence of its resemblance to the colour of the *Pyrus Japonica* blossom. None of the original *Sung* pieces, so far as is known, could properly have been described by such a name.

During the *Yuan* dynasty (1260–1367) red in the glaze seems to have been used only as an auxiliary. It is found associated, in the form of splashes or clouds, with the beautiful *clair-de-lune* glaze for which the epoch was famous.

Not until the *Ming* dynasty is the student unquestionably confronted with the grand, dazzling reds that subsequently became so priceless in the eyes of Chinese virtuosi. Among the porcelains of the *Hsuan-tê* era (1426–1435) the *Tao-lu* says that vases of *rouge vif* were classed as "precious," and that they were glossy, solid, and durable. The same book quotes this passage from another work: "In the *Hsuan-tê* period there were manufactured at the Imperial workshop cups of the red called *Chi-hung*, having handles shaped like fishes. To produce this red the potters mixed with the glaze the powder of a precious red stone which came from the Occident. On emerging from the kiln the fish blazed out from the body. The glaze was lustrous and thick." The expression *Chi-hung* signifies the clear red of the sky after rain. Such poetic epithets were not unnaturally employed by the Chinese, for the reds of their fine porcelains were in truth a poem. H'siang, in his Illustrated Catalogue, speaks of the same red as "the colour of liquid dawn" (*Liu-h'ia-hung*), a term finely descriptive of its clear, pure brilliancy. It will be observed that the description quoted by the *Tao-lu* is somewhat confusing, being applicable equally to white porcelain decorated with red fishes, or to red porcelain having fish-shaped handles. In point of fact, both kinds were manufactured with marked success by the *Hsuan-tê* experts, but as the former has already been included in the section of "porcelain having decoration under the glaze," further reference need not be made to it here. The two varieties of *Hsuan-tê* ware that belong to the present part of the subject are, first, that having a portion of the surface red and the remainder white; and second, that having its whole surface red. Examples of both varieties are depicted by H'siang in his Illustrated Catalogue. Of the first he shows a censer, three inches high and three and a half inches in diameter. The upper part is covered with deep red glaze of "rosy dawn tint," and the lower with snow-white glaze, the two colours showing a dazzling contrast. The surface is described as having millet-like marks in faint relief. Of the second variety he gives two examples, a wine-pot and a "palace saucer-shaped dish." The glaze of the former he calls "deep red" and that of the latter "bright red." In both cases the surface of the specimens is covered with engraved designs, a favourite addition to choice pieces. At the time when H'siang wrote, three hundred years ago, this tiny censer was valued at a thousand taels, and the owner of the wine-pot had paid some three thousand dollars (gold) for it. It is quite evident, therefore, that the *Hsuan-tê* experts were veritable masters in the production of red monochromes, and it is almost equally evident that specimens of their best work need not be looked for by foreign collectors of the present time. How then was this wonderful red obtained? The *Tao-lu*, referring to the *Chi-hung* porcelains of the *Hsuan-tê* era, says that there were two kinds, "bright red" (*Hsien-hung*), and "precious stone red" (*Pao-shi-hung*), but this distinction was not radical: it referred only to a difference of tone, the "precious stone red" being fuller and deeper than the "bright red." Both were obtained from silicate of copper, but the manufacturing processes remain to this day a mystery. Undoubtedly the production of a fine red was always regarded as a keramic *tour de force* in China. In the *Tao-lu* it is stated that few potters were capable of producing the *Chi-hung* vases, and that their manufacture was only attempted by artists who imitated the choice old *Kuan-yao* (*céladon*) — that is to say, by specialists. The eminent chemist M. Salvetat, referring to the *Tao-lu's* statement, says: — "This is confirmed by what we know of the difficulties experienced in maintaining oxide of copper (in the form of silicate of protoxide) at a high temperature in the presence of an abundance of atmospheric air." Indeed, it is probable that the best Chinese experts could never cope absolutely with these difficulties, and that infinitesimal variations in the condition of the kiln made themselves apparent in the tone of the glaze. When M. d'Entrecolles investigated the subject of porcelain making at Ching-tê-chên, he took pains to acquaint himself with the methods pursued by the manufacturers of *Chi-hung* monochromes. How far he succceded will be apparent from his account of the matter: —"Red oxide of copper and the powder of a certain reddish stone were mixed. A Chinese doctor tells me that the stone is a species of alum which is used for medicinal purposes. These are ground in a mortar, the urine of a youth and petrosilex being added to them at the same time. I have not been able to discover the quantity of these ingredients, those who have the secret being careful not to divulge it. The compound is applied to the paste before stoving; no other glazing matter is employed. I am assured that when this colour is to be given to porcelain no *petuntse* is used in forming the *pâte*, but in its place there is mixed with the *kaolin* a yellow earth prepared in the same way as *petun-tse*. It is conceivable that such a clay is better suited to receive this species of glaze." Incomplete as is the information afforded by this account, it shows at least that the preparation of the red glaze — whether *Hsien-hung* (*rouge vif*) or *Pao-shi-hung* (ruby-red) — was a work demanding the greatest skill and experience. It would be exceedingly interesting to know how the Chinese potter originally achieved this admirable monochrome. Complete success he could never command, owing to the extreme sensitiveness of his materials to atmospheric influences during stoving, but it is pretty certain that with the exception of trifling modifications thus caused, he owed nothing to accident. Of course these early *Ming* specimens are now known only by written descriptions and by H'siang's illustrations, which latter, however useful, are evidently incapable of conveying any accurate impression of the colour. Indeed, none of the fine Chinese reds can by any possibility be reproduced on paper: they lose the brilliancy and lustre to which so much of their beauty is due.

The enormous values quoted by H'siang for the *Chi-hung* pieces illustrated in his catalogue prove that the successful production of such ware had virtually ceased before the era of which he wrote (second half of sixteenth century). The great renown of the *Chêng-hwa* (1465–1487) potters suggests that they too, ought to have bequeathed to posterity some fine examples of this highly prized monochrome. But in their time attention was especially directed to decoration with vitrifiable enamels, and they seemed to have used red chiefly as an auxiliary. At all events, no connoisseur who has written of their era ascribes to them any particular proficiency in the manufacture of red monochromes, though there is no reason to suppose that they were much, if at all, less skilled in this direction than their *Hsuan-tê* predecessors. During the *Cheng-tê* period (1506–1522), however, the production of fine reds was certainly carried on. The potters of this time succeeded admirably in the two tones of red, *rouge vif* and ruby, and left behind them a reputation for such work. But of the *Chia-ching* era (1522–1566) it is recorded: — "In this epoch the clay used for *rouge vif* porcelains was exhausted, and the mode of stoving them ceased to be the same as before. With difficulty could they make vases of the colour called *Fan-hung*," that is to say, red obtained from peroxide of iron. This is an important fact. What special kind of clay is referred to there is no means of determining, inasmuch as it is only known that in preparing the porcelain mass for red monochromes of *Chi-hung* type, the earth used for *craquelé* ware was employed in part, and there is nothing recorded as to a failure in the supply of this petrosilex. But the question of colouring material is plain. Peroxide of iron was incomparably easier to manipulate than silicate of copper, and the result obtained with it was correspondingly inferior. The manner of its preparation, as described by M. d'Entrecolles, and confirmed by the *Tao-lu* and Dr. Bushell, was to roast sulphate of iron to a red heat, add to each ounce of this five ounces of carbonate of lead, and mix the two with glue. M. Salvetat, speaking of this process, says: — "In order that this colour should vitrify, it must evidently borrow a sufficiency of silica from the porcelain itself. One sees that such a colour could possess brilliancy only when applied in a very thin layer." But in truth this *Fan-hung* red was altogether a different matter from the *Chi-hung*, being in fact an enamel laid over the glaze, fixed at the low temperature of the enamelling oven, and not possessing any brilliancy in the sense conveyed by the term as applied to a monochromatic glaze. An opaque coral colour, fine enough in its way, but not for an instant comparable to the *Chi-hung* red, was all that the best potter could obtain with the peroxide of iron. If, then, the keramist of the *Ming* dynasty ceased to be able to work with any other red colouring matter after the year 1522, it might be concluded that red monochromes of the clear, brilliant type were not produced from that time. Such a conclusion would be exaggerated. During the eras of *Lung-ching* (1567–1572) and *Wan-li* (1573–1619) *Chi-hung* glazes were still manufactured, though they are said to have fallen far short of their *Hsuan-tê* and *Ching-tê* predecessors. Thus, in the year 1571 — the fifth of the *Lung-ching* era — it is on record that a Censor memorialised the Throne to permit the substitution of *Fan-hung* for *Hsien-hung* (*rouge vif*) in the wares for imperial use, so as to avoid distressing the manufacturers who were required to supply porcelains for the palace. Probably owing in part to this remonstrance, which must itself have had its origin in a marked deterioration of expert ability, the list of porcelains requisitioned for imperial use in that year contained the item : — "Rice-bowls and saucers of the vermilion red prepared from iron oxide instead of the bright copper red." Indeed, with the exception of special artists like the renowned Hao Shi-chu (1573–1619), whose cups are said to have been brilliant as vermilion, it may be concluded that the *Chi-hung* monochromes ceased to be produced after the year 1570.

Concerning these *Ming* reds, the illustrations from H'siang's Manuscript and his accompanying descriptions furnish the best and practically the only available guides. It has long been the habit with Western amateurs to ascribe to the *Ming* factories whatever choice pieces of the *Chi-hung* class happily come into their possession. The delusion belongs to the numerous myths which bric-à-brac dealers carefully foster and collectors readily credit. Outside China there are virtually no *Ming Chi-hung* monochrones in existence, and in China they are few and far between. The connoisseur must be content to know them vicariously, and to accept as true indications of their beauty the expressive names deservedly given them by their Chinese admirers, ruby red, the rosy blush of liquid dawn, and the crimson glow of the sky after rain and storm.

The red monochromes familiar to American and European virtuosi are from the kilns of *Kang-hsi* (1662–1722), *Yung-ching* (1723–1725), *Chien-lung* (1736–1785) and even later epochs. In the great keramic renaissance that took place at the accession of *Kang-hsi*, the potters of Ching-tê-chên did not fail to turn their attention to ware so celebrated and highly valued as the *Chi-hung* monochromes. It was then that the much esteemed porcelain known in the West as "*Sang de bœuf*" may be said to have come into existence, for although it was produced also during the *Ming* dynasty, no specimens of that epoch left China, or that, at any rate, if any pieces did go Westward their number was quite insignificant.

According to the *Tao-lu*, as quoted above, the *Chi-hung* monochromes were the work of specialists only, and it would appear that the revival of their manufacture at the commencement of the *Kang-hsi* era was due to a potter called Lang. The ware, at all events, is known in China as *Lang-yao*, and Chinese virtuosi explain this term as having reference to a family of potters celebrated for their skill in achieving red glazes. All efforts have failed, however, to discover anything about the exact time when the family flourished, or the date when its members ceased to devote themselves to such work. In the catalogue of a collection presented to the British Museum by Mr. A. W. Franks, F.R.S., the following note is appended to the description of "a bottle covered with a deep but brilliant red glaze:" —

> This specimen is from Mr. A. B. Mitford's collection, and is thus described in the catalogue: — "A bottle: *Lang-yao-tsu*, porcelain from the Lang furnace. The Lang family were a family of famous potters who possessed the secret of this peculiar glaze and paste. They became extinct about the year 1610; and their pottery is highly esteemed and fetches great prices at Peking. The Chinese have never been able successfully to imitate this ware."

This statement appears to be based on some confusion between the approximate time when *Chi-hung* glazes ceased to be produced by the *Ming* potters and the epoch when the last members of the Lang family worked. At any rate, whatever may be the true history of the family, it is certain that the fine *Lang-yao* known to Western collectors dates, almost without exception, from the middle of the seventeenth to nearly the middle of the eighteenth century, the great majority of choice specimens being from the

Kang-hsi kilns. In everything that makes for excellence — depth, brilliancy, and purity of colour, lustre and solidity of glaze, closeness and fineness of *pâte*, and general technical skill — the *Kang-hsi Lang-yao* yields nothing to the *Chi-hung* monochromes of the *Ming* dynasty. An important difference is that, whereas the *Hsien-hung* (*rouge vif*) and *Pao-shi-hung* (ruby red) wares of the *Ming* potters generally had incised decoration under the glaze, the *Lang-yao* is invariably without this feature. In truth the *Lang-yao* is not the real *Tsing* representative of the *Ming Chi-hung*. It will be shown presently that the latter is more accurately reproduced in another and still choicer porcelain. But the *Lang-yao* is the *Sang de bœuf* of the West, and in Chinese eyes good examples of it rank very high among fine porcelains.

Perhaps there is no ware about which inexperienced amateurs are more constantly and egregiously deceived. Yet the marks of excellence are so plain that, if once seen, their absence can scarcely fail to be detected. Speaking broadly, there are five varieties, but the collector, in accepting this classification, must remember that it is scarcely possible to find two specimens of *Lang-yao* exactly alike. The potter, as has been already remarked, could never control the conditions in the kiln sufficiently to count with absolute certainty on the tone and tint of the glaze after firing.

In the first and choicest variety the glaze is comparatively thin. Its brilliancy, softness, and sheen are indescribable. Sometimes it covers the surface completely and uniformly, except at the upper rim where a fringe of white is seen; sometimes it merges into a broad cloud of much lighter colour. Of course the latter want of absolute regularity within the limits of

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VASE (HEIGHT, 11 INCHES) OF *KANG-HSI TING-YAO*.
Copied from an ancient bronze. Decoration in relief. Soft paste. (See page 264.)

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the same piece must be regarded as a technical defect, but it often increases rather than diminishes the charm of the ware. The finest colour can be compared to nothing more aptly than to a perfectly ripe cherry. It has all the transparency, *éclat*, and delicacy of the ruddy fruit. There is crackle, but it forms an almost imperceptible network, merely serving to give play of light and shade. Many tones of red are to be found in this class, but all alike are distinguished by clearness. Occasionally there is found a faint frosting of the surface or of parts of it; the glaze of such specimens bears a close resemblance to the skin of a freshly plucked persimmon.

In the second variety the glaze is appreciably thicker; the colour deeper and less transparent. From brilliant ruby the red passes through innumerable gradations of tone to ox-blood, strongly mottled by dark spots of varying size. Not infrequently a portion of the surface in this class of *Lang-yao* presents a distinctly green hue, due to excess of oxygen in the furnace. Such a feature, though in truth a technical fault, does not detract from the beauty of the ware, and since it can only occur in glazes coloured with silicate of copper — that is to say, in the glazes of genuine specimens — its presence may not be unwelcome to the amateur. There is crackle in this variety also, but owing to the thickness of the glaze and its greater opacity, the meshes are less perceptible.

In the third variety the glaze is distinctly more vitreous than in either of the preceding cases; and is further distinguished by the presence of minute flashes or flecks of lighter colour. This, though still a fine and valuable porcelain, must be ranked after the types of *Lang-yao* described above. The white flashes, though a *tour de force*, deprive the surface of solidity and softness, and the red has a shallower and less pure tone. The crackle shows with greater distinctness owing to the vitreous character of the glaze.

The fourth variety is a lighter red than any of the preceding: sometimes, indeed, it may be described as salmon-colour. The tone of a good specimen is perfectly uniform throughout, and the crackle becomes an important feature, being both larger, more regular and more strongly marked than in any of the other varieties. This type would scarcely be reckoned as *Lang-yao* by many Western collectors, but Chinese connoisseurs unhesitatingly place it in the family.

The fifth variety scarcely deserves, perhaps, to be separately classed, since it differs from the fourth chiefly in having spots of darker colour and sometimes mottling of greenish white. Generally, too, its under surface is not glazed, as is always the case with the first four varieties. This mark of inferior technique causes some Chinese connoisseurs to exclude it from the *Lang-yao* species, but it ought to be admitted for the sake of its other points of similarity.

The *pâte* of all true *Lang-yao* is of fine texture, absolutely free from grit, hard, white, and close. The amateur cannot pay too much attention to this point. He must not expect to find very thin biscuit: the rich red glazes required a solid body. But it is absolutely essential that every genuine specimen should have perfectly manipulated, pure porcelain *pâte*, the rim at the base neatly finished, and the lower surface, as well as the inside glazed. With regard to the auxiliary glaze used on under and inner surfaces, it is of three kinds: — First, white or buff coloured, usually but not necessarily crackled; secondly, green *craquelé*, and thirdly, light brown (the colour known in China as "sesamum-soy," or *Chih-ma-chiang*). Some connoisseurs take these glazes as evidence of grade, asserting that the green is associated with the best types of *Lang-yao*, the sesamum-soy with the second quality, and the white with the third. No such distinction really exists. On the contrary, the fourth, or salmon-coloured, variety of *Lang-yao*, as classed above, constantly has green *craquelé* glaze on its interior and under surface, while the variety placed first, and unquestionably most esteemed, usually has white or bluff glaze in these places.

True *Lang-yao* has no marks of factory or period. This does not appear to have been always the case with the *Chi-hung* pieces of the *Ming* dynasty. One of the specimens depicted in H'siang's Catalogue has the mark of the *Hsuan-tê* era engraved in the *pâte*.

Although no record is yet forthcoming as to the time when the Lang potters ceased to work, the indications furnished by their ware itself go to show that it was not manufactured after the close of the *Kang-hsi*, or perhaps of the *Yung-ching* era (1736). It is not possible, of course, to speak with certainty on this point, but Chinese connoisseurs also indorse the above view.

The *Lang-yao* is not by any means the only red monochrome that does credit to the potters of the reigning dynasty. It will be seen presently that other and even choicer varieties were produced. Here, however, it is convenient to speak of inferior reds which are constantly mistaken by amateurs for genuine *Lang-yao*. These are the *Tsing* representatives of the *Ming Chi-hung*. It has been shown above that the *Chi-hung* monochromes of the *Ming* dynasty included two equally beautiful and admirable glazes, *rouge vif* and ruby-red. But, curiously enough, from the commencement of the *Kang-hsi* era the term *Chi-hung* came to be applied to reds in general, exclusive of varieties distinguished by special names, as the *Lang-yao*. Many *Chi-hung* pieces of the *Tsing* dynasty are highly attractive and charming, and their reproduction seems to be as far beyond the strength of modern potters as is the imitation of the *Lang-yao*. But Chinese connoisseurs place this later *Chi-hung* in a distinctly lower rank, and they are undoubtedly right in doing so. For the *Chi-hung* glaze of the *Tsing* factories cannot vie either with the *Lang-yao* in richness or brilliancy, or with other monochromes, to be presently mentioned, in delicacy and purity. In fact the distinguishing feature of the *Chi-hung*, as compared with the *Lang-yao*, is a certain duskiness or muddiness of tone: the colour, though often very beautiful and æsthetic, lacks the depth and gleam of *Sang de bœuf*. It should be premised, however, that in the *Chi-hung* also there are many grades, and that, like the *Lang-yao*, no two specimens are absolutely identical in tone. The typical *Chi-hung* of the *Chien-lung* era — for it does not appear to have been much manufactured by the *Kang-hsi* experts — is dark red of subdued shade, the tone quite uniform throughout, but the whole surface microscopically dappled, showing that the colour was applied by insufflation. The *pâte* is close and fine, the edges are well finished, and the inner and under surfaces are coated with white glaze. There is no crackle anywhere, and a year-mark in seal character is often found in blue under the glaze. Porcelain of this quality was evidently manufactured to take a high place. Preserving the same features as to absence of crackle, presence of white glaze on inner and under surfaces, careful technique and fine *pâte*, the *Chien-lung Chi-hung* passes through innumerable shades of colour, many pieces being of the liver-red class, while others approach the colour of light peach-bloom. The miscrosopic dappling disappears in the glazes of light tone. All these porcelains are satisfactory from a technical point of view, but they vary greatly in beauty according to colour. Their glaze never assumes the green tinge so often seen in *Lang-yao* specimens, from which alone it may be inferred that the colouring material differed from that employed by the *Lang* potters. Their manufacture continued as late as the *Taou-kwang* era (1821–1851), but in general it may be said that the younger the specimen the more clumsy its finish and the less pure its tone.

The commonest and least valuable *Chi-hung* — manufactured, with rare exceptions during the nineteenth century — may be placed in a separate class. It is distinguished by three points, the coarse mottling and poor tone of its colour; the thin, vitreous appearance of its glaze, and the presence of scratch-like crackle. In the worst examples a colour approaching brick-red is seen; the lower rim of the piece is clumsily finished, often indeed rough or jagged, and the *pâte*, instead of being white and close, is dark and coarse, an inferior stone-ware. When such features are present the amateur can be at once certain that he has to do with a worthless specimen. Unfortunately, however, guides so distinct are not always present. Some examples are tolerably rich and strong in colour, and not a few pieces dating from the *Chien-lung* era are in every respect fine examples of monochromes, their only fault being want of brilliancy and purity. Even later specimens may mislead the unwary, for though their biscuit is comparatively coarse, their technique is fair, and their interior and under surfaces are covered with white, or buff, glaze crackled or not crackled. On the whole, however, the garish, vitreous aspect, lack of depth, and weakness of tone of the great majority of *Chi-hung* porcelains ought to obviate the numerous mistakes made about them.

Rich and beautiful as is the *Lang-yao,* it is rivalled, and in Chinese estimation sometimes excelled, by a porcelain of which the colour is called *Chiang-tou-hung,* owing to its resemblance to the blossom of a species of bean. This colour is indescribable except by recourse to some such comparison. The *Chiang-tou-hung* is from the *Kang-hsi* factories. It may be regarded as the *Tsing* representative of the *Hsien-hung* of the *Ming* dynasty, though the latter appears to have been a darker red. As compared with the *Lang-yao,* the distinctive feature of the *Chiang-tou* red is delicacy. The tender bloom of the bean blossom well describes it. The tone varies greatly, but the closer the resemblance to the natural colour of the bean blossom, the greater the esteem accorded to a specimen. It does not appear that a clear distinction has hitherto been observed by Western collecters between *Lang-yao, Chi-hung* and *Chiang-tou-hung,* but by Chinese connoisseurs the three wares are never confounded.

At the head of all red glazes stands the *Pin-kwo-ts'ing.* This term signifies the "green of sprouting plants," or the "green of the water-shield," and its use implies that in the eyes of Chinese connoisseurs the presence of green constitutes a distinguishing feature of the glaze, though Western collectors generally class it with red monochromes. In America this beautiful porcelain has received the name of "Peach bloom," a happy appellation, for the most prized specimens may be best compared to the colour of a peach's rind before the contrast of velvet green and glowing but delicate red has been impaired by the yellow of ripeness. It does not appear, however, that in choosing the term "peach bloom" American connoisseurs gave any thought to the presence of green in the glaze. They were inspired solely by the resemblance between the surface red and the rich bloom of a peach, and in descriptive catalogues choice specimens are extolled entirely for the tone and uniformity of their monochromatic red as though the intrusion of any other colour would be a blemish. The Chinese expert, on the contrary, regards the presence of green as essential, and places first among all coloured glazes of Ching-tê-chên specimens of *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* on which the delicate glowing red is broken by broad fields of tender velvety green. No distinct varieties of the ware are recognised in China, but for purposes of descriptive convenience three principal types may be noted: first, a pure red monochrome; secondly, red mottled with white; and thirdly, red in combination with green. The first type is the celebrated "Peach bloom" of American collectors. There are various tones of this red, from the full, warm blush of a ripe apple to a very light flesh colour. All are beautiful and highly valued. The second type is the so-called "crushed strawberry." Its white dappling or clouding is often accompanied by speckles of transparent green which greatly enhance the charm. The third type, of which the presence of green is the distinguishing feature, is said to be due in great part to accidents of temperature in the kiln — some sudden oxidation of the reducing flame. But it is difficult to credit this, for in certain specimens the green occupies a place at least as important as the red. It is a green comparable only to the soft, restful colour seen in the rind of an apple or a peach, and it passes into red resembling just such a warm flush as Nature associates with this green. Possibly the variegation from red to green was originally due to chance, but that it afterwards became a special technical triumph there can be very little doubt. At all events, the result of the combination in its happiest form is that there is reproduced in a porcelain glaze the skin of a ripe peach, with all its exquisite shading of tones. The *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* is, in fact, the prince of Chinese coloured glazes. Fine specimens are exceedingly rare. They generally take the form of utensils connected with caligraphy, the most revered of all accomplishments in the Middle Kingdom — as little flower vases for placing on the desk; low bottles for washing the pen, ovoid in section with wide circular bases and narrow necks; round flattened bowls for holding water to mix with Indian ink, and small boxes for vermilion. As was the case in the *rouge vif* of the *Ming* dynasty, engraved decoration is often found under the *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* glaze, but it seldom covers the whole surface, being generally confined to medallions of coiled dragons, phœnixes with curved wings, or floral scrolls. The *pâte* is pure white and perfectly fine; the inner and under surfaces are covered with white glaze; there is no crackle, and the mark of the *Kang-hsi* era is generally written in blue under the white glaze.

A third special variety of choice red glaze is called *Fan-hung* by the Chinese. It has been shown that the ideograph *Fan* (rice flour), when used with reference to the *Ting-yao*, implies the presence of a greyish buff shade. Its employment in the case of a red glaze indicates that the red is permeated by a soft whitish tone, a rime, as though the glaze had been partially frozen. Fine specimens of *Fan-hung* are not inferior to either the *Lang* or the *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* porcelains. Sometimes they have patches or spots of transparent green similar to that seen in the finest type of *Pin-kwo-ts'ing*. A rare variety of *Fan-hung* is decorated with designs in blue *sous couverte* amid the red ground. In specimens of *Fan-hung* regarded by Chinese connoisseurs as the most delicate in tone and admirable in technique, the glaze at the lower part of the vase passes into an exceedingly soft *clair-de-lune* tint, as though the latter were the base of the general colour. The effect of this transition is very beautiful. Marks of date are less frequent upon *Fan-hung* than upon *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* pieces, and sometimes the bottoms of the former are left entirely without glaze. The pastes of all these grand reds alike are white, fine and carefully manipulated, and there is no crackle.

The *Pao-shi-hung*, or precious ruby glaze, for which, as described above, the *Hsuan-té* potters of the *Ming* dynasty were so famous, made its appearance again in the *Kang-hsi* era. It is scarcely to be distinguished from some specimens of *Lang-yao* in colour, but it has no crackle, and the glaze on the inner and under surfaces is clear white. Colouring matter said to be that employed in the preparation of this very choice porcelain, was analyzed at Sèvres, and found to consist simply of oxide of iron with a flux. It is scarcely credible that the clear, brilliant ruby red of the *Pao-shi-hung* porcelain can have been obtained with a material reputed so inferior.

Another variety of red, scarcely, however, deserving special classification, is called *Hung-mien*, or "cotton-floss red." Whether this term is derived from the name of a maker or was suggested by a peculiar mottling of the glaze, remains uncertain. The ware may easily be mistaken for *Lang-yao*, of which, indeed it seems to have been intended as a reproduction. It lacks, however, the grand phases of colour that distinguish true *Sang-de-bœuf.*

The above represent all the red monochromes *de grand feu* — that is to say, monochromes produced in the open furnace at the same temperature as that required to bake the porcelain mass on which they are superposed. Reds painted on the biscuit and vitrified at a comparatively low temperature, belong to another class — that of *couleurs de mouffle.*

The *Tao-lu*, speaking of the renowned expert Tang, who with Nien presided over the imperial factories at Ching-tê-chên from 1727, says that in a memoir written by a certain *savant*, Tang is credited with having revived the manufacture of brilliant red monochromes. The inference suggested by this is that such porcelains had ceased to be produced for some years when Tang assumed charge of the factories. But Chinese connoisseurs of the present day are unanimous in ascribing to *Kang-hsi* experts the finest specimens of the choice glazes enumerated above.

The fact seems to be that they were produced with almost, though not altogether, equal success in the *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* potteries. Whatever difference existed has no great importance for collectors, except in respect of the *Lang-yao*, *Chiang-tou-hung*, and *Pin-kwa-ts'ing* glazes, all of which belong *par excellence* to the *Kang-hsi* period.

Among reds developed at the comparatively low temperature of the enameller's furnace the first place is given to the *Tsao-hung* or "Jujube Red" (red of the *Zizyphus vulgaris*). It need scarcely be observed that the difficulty of verbally distinguishing these various shades or tones of red is insuperable. The Chinese showed their appreciation of the fact by going to Nature for comparisons. The "Jujube Red" is a full, brilliant colour, perfectly opaque even when applied in the thinnest layers. In this latter quality lies one of its greatest merits, since, when employed for decorating over the glaze, it shows all the points of a perfect enamel — brilliancy, smoothness, depth, and uniformity — and at the same time clings to the surface in a layer of such imperceptible thinness as to seem a part of the glaze itself. Thus used it plays an important *rôle* in the manufacture of the finest Chinese porcelains, sometimes covering the whole surface of a monochrome, sometimes combined with coloured enamels, and sometimes surrounding reserved designs in white. Of the *Tsao-hung* monochromes — generally small pieces — little need be said. Beautiful as they are, they cannot be classed with such glazes as the *Lang-yao*, the *Chiang-tou-hung*, the *Pin-kwa-ts'ing*, and the *Fan-hung*, which are developed in the open furnace at a high temperature. But of the *Tsao-hung*, in combination with other decorative agents, it is scarcely possible to speak too highly. This is the beautiful enamel found on many of the "Imperial Porcelains" (*Yu-chi*, or *Kuan-yao*) of the best periods of the present dynasty, where it completely covers whatever portions of the surface are not occupied by floral designs in brilliant colours — green, yellow, blue, purple, black, and white. In the whole range of keramic *chefs-d'œuvre* there are not to be found any finer examples of decoration in vitrifiable enamels. But the choicest and most charming conception worked out by the aid of the *Tsao-hung* red is of the type shown in a *Hsuan-té* censer of H'siang's Illustrated Catalogue, concerning which the author says that "the upper two-thirds of the body and the handles are covered with a deep red glaze of rosy-dawn tint, the lower part enamelled white, pure as driven snow, the two colours mingling in a curved line dazzling the eyes." Similar pieces, though apparently few and far between, were manufactured by the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* experts. They are, indeed, improvements upon H'siang's specimen, for the white surface, instead of being separated from the red simply by a curved line, is covered with wave-pattern — engraved in the *pâte* with such delicacy that the superincumbent glaze is as smooth as velvet — the crests of the waves curling up into the brilliant red above. It is probable that in H'siang's censer the red was painted directly on the *pâte*, a method that would have added largely to its depth and brilliancy. But the *Tsing* reproductions of this fine type gain in artistic effect what they lose in grandeur of tone.

The second red among those applied to porcelain already stoved, is the *Yen-chi-hung*, or "Rouge Red."

It differs from the "Jujube Red" in having a comparatively lustreless surface, usually granulated — though in many of the choicest specimens the granulations are only microscopically visible — whereas the "Jujube Red" is perfectly smooth. As a monchrome the "Rouge Red" is chiefly found on rice cups with covers, shallow bowls, and small plates. There are many tones, but the chief type is well described by comparison to the bright vermilion patches on the cheeks of a Chinese belle. In conjunction with enamelled decoration it plays a part not less important than the "Jujube Red," especially in the "Imperial Porcelains," where it is preferred by some connoisseurs on account of its peculiar softness and harmonious effect. It is this red that is found on some of the best "Medallion Bowls," so well known to Western collectors, where it covers the spaces between the medallions.

"Coral Red," called in China *Shan-hu-hung*, also belongs to the family of *couleurs de mouffle*. It is applied in a much thicker coat than either of the above reds; typical specimens look exactly as though they were made of highly polished coral. It does not rank with the choicest monochromes, but when combined with blue under the glaze — a very rare combination — the effect is rich and beautiful.

In addition to the above there are, of course, special tones of red to which special names are given. These made their first appearance on the palette of the *Famille Rose* decorators, at the close of the *Kang-hsi* era. Being in great part the outcome of foreign intercourse, they received the distinctive appellation of "Western" (*Si-yang*), as is seen in the ideographs for "crimson," and "pink," the "Rose du Barry" of Sèvres. These are used both for painting over the glaze and for monochromes. As monochromes they are found on the so-called "ruby-backed" egg-shell bowls and plates, so highly esteemed by American and European collector, though "Rouge Red" and "Jujube Red" are also employed for the same purpose. In decoration over the glaze they are seen on the beautiful porcelains of the Rose Family.

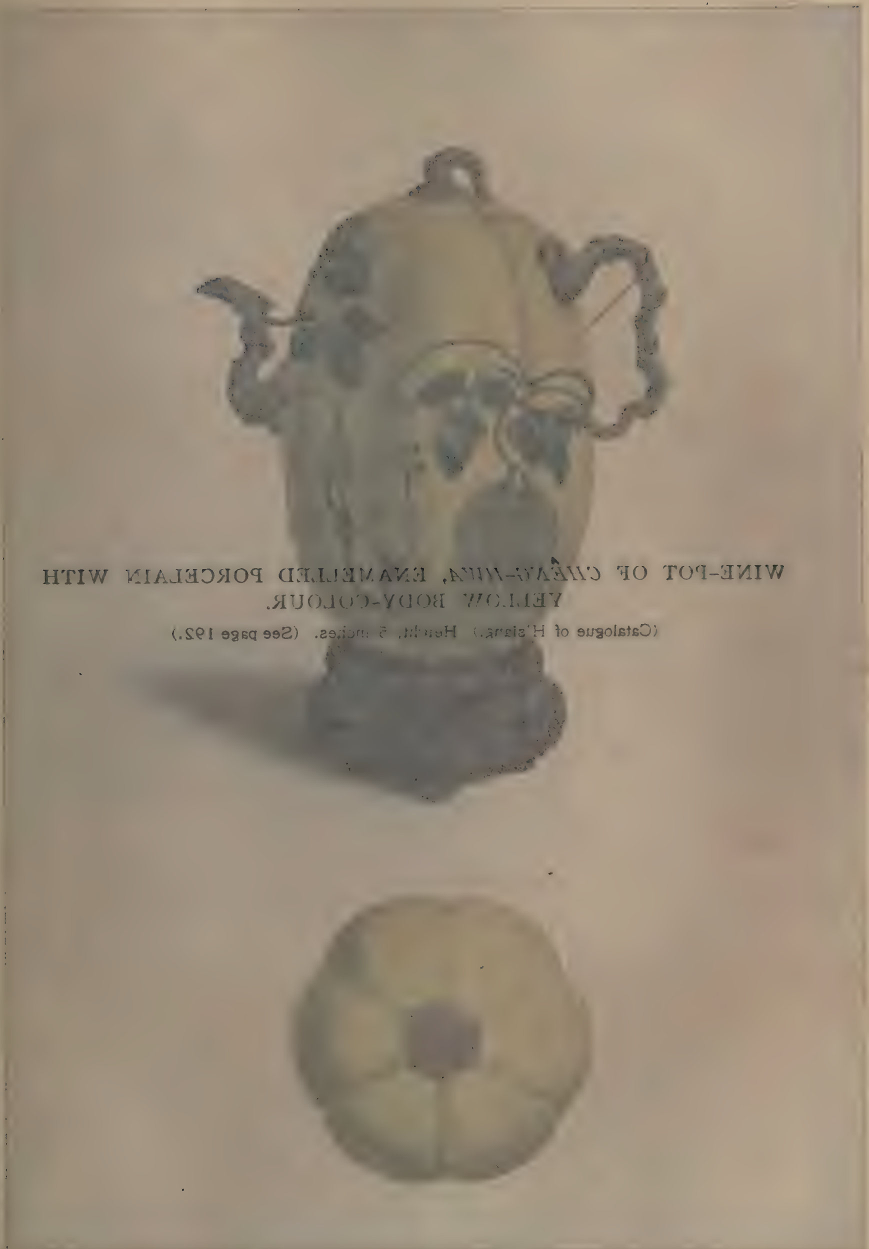
The term "ruby-backed" — to which reference has already been made — is employed by Western connoisseurs to denote porcelains which, though they do not constitute a separate family, being simply a variety of the *Famille Rose*, have seemed worthy of independent designation. They are certainly very choice and beautiful examples of keramic art. Their distinguishing feature, as the name denotes, is that the outer surface is completely covered with red enamel. The porcelain being as thin as paper, this coloured backing is distinctly seen through it, an effect of great softness and delicacy being thus produced. The enamel generally used is that called *Yen-chi-hung* (rouge red), but *Tsao-hung* (jujube red) is also found, as well as crimson and pink of the "European type." It will be seen, therefore, that the colour of the backing varies, and that the term "ruby red" is too limited to be truly descriptive. Plates, bowls, and small cups are practically the only examples of this ware. Evidently the potter, guided by the consideration that the effect of the enamel backing would be lost unless the whole inner surface of the piece were visible, and doubtless deterred by the difficulties of the task, generally refrained from making vases. Sometimes the "ruby" backing is the only decoration employed, but usually the other side of the specimen has designs, more or less elaborate, in coloured enamels of the *Famille Rose* type. The choicest pieces of all have designs incised in the *pâte*, with or without addition of coloured enamels. These porcelains belong to the "Imperial class." Their extreme thinness and delicacy, as well as their great cost, must have precluded their use except by persons of large means.

YELLOW.

There is unanimity among Oriental and Occidental connoisseurs alike in assigning the first place among monochromes to the grand reds of the *Chiang-tou-hung*, the *Pin-kwo-ts'ing*, the *Lang-yao*, and the *Fan-hung* glazes. But concerning the porcelain to be ranked second, differences of opinion will of course be found. Judging from the Illustrated Catalogue of H'siang, the honour lay between yellow and purple at the end of the sixteenth century. Of the two, yellow is the more uncommon.

Yellow glazes were manufactured in times as remote as the *Tang* dynasty (618–907), but they did not attain any reputation. The ware in which they were employed — *Sheu-yao* — was produced in the province of Kiang-nan. Subsequently, under the *Yuan* dynasty (1260–1368), a stone-ware called *Hu-tien-yao*, manufactured at a village of the same name in the neighbourhood of Ching-tê-chên, had impure yellow glaze run over archaic designs deeply incised in the *pâte*. Surviving pieces of this ware indicate that it belonged to a low grade, not suffering comparison with many other porcelains by contemporary potters, which are said to have shown the grace and elegance of fine *Sung* manufactures.

It was not till the *Ming* dynasty that the beautiful yellow monochromes so highly prized by all connoisseurs made their appearance; or, to speak more accurately, it was not till then that they elicited the admiration of connoisseurs. As usual it seems that the era with which the first successful manufacture of the ware is associated by the Chinese must in reality be regarded as the time when it reached a very high, if not the highest, stage of development. As to yellow monochromes this time was the *Hung-chih* era (1488–1505) of the *Ming* dynasty. H'siang, in his Illustrated Catalogue, shows several specimens of *Hung-chih* yellow, and appends to his description of one of them the statement that light yellow was the colour most valued in this reign. From his account it appears that the choicest shade was the yellow of a newly husked chestnut, and that bright yellow occupied the second place. As in the case of *cêladons* and white *Ting-yao*, the shapes and decorative designs of old bronzes were chosen by the potters for choice pieces, the decoration being generally incised in the *pâte* but sometimes also in bas-relief. The point of note about this ware was that the glaze itself contained the colouring material, which did not consist of a mere layer of enamel as was the case with inferior porcelains of later date. The difference is essential. For whereas the beautiful canary-yellow ware of first quality is thin, almost transparent, of waxy softness and possessing a peculiar shell-like delicacy, the commoner class of yellow porcelain has thick *pâte*, a comparatively lustreless surface, and an opaque colour. It is with this latter variety that Western collectors are chiefly familiar, the former being not only scarce but also confined to insignificant



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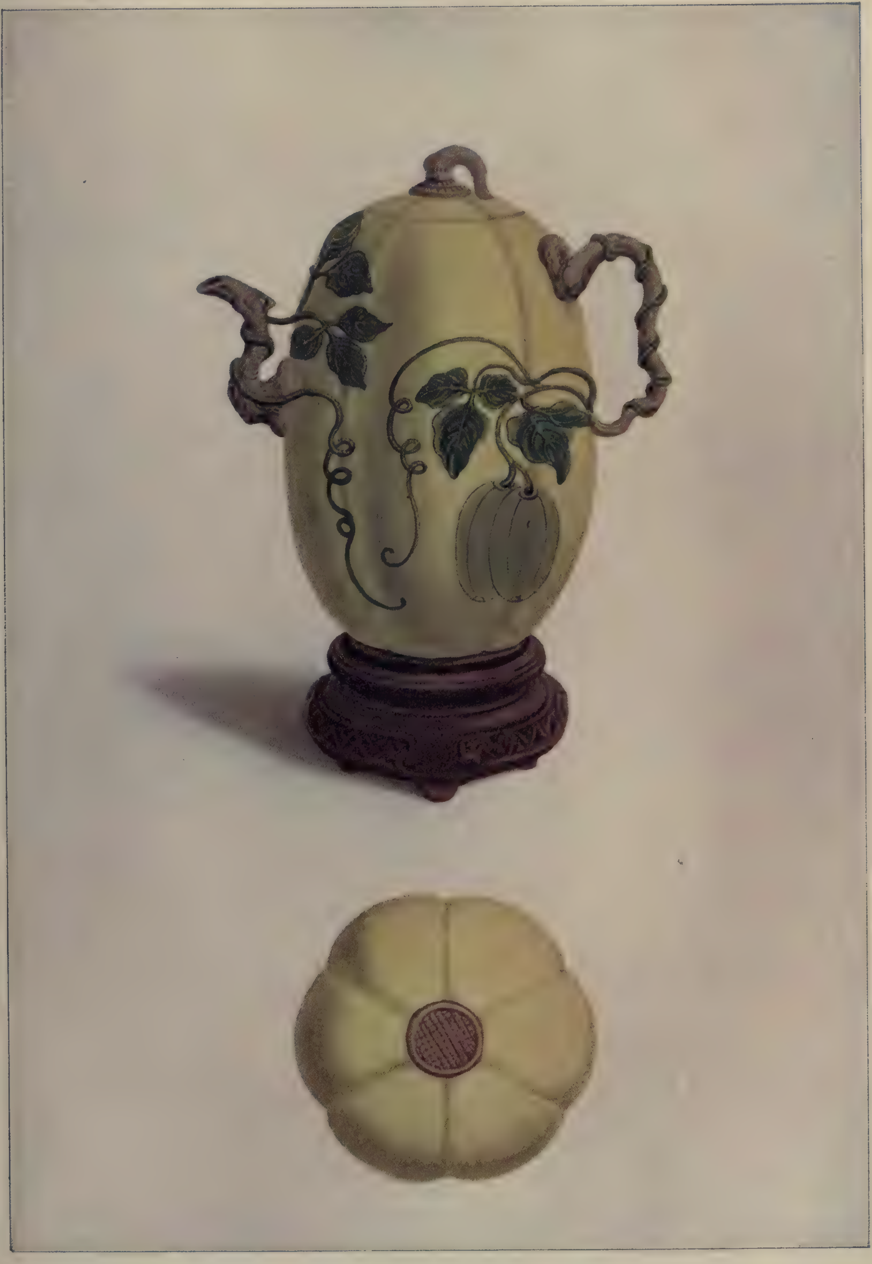
WINE-POT OF *CHÊNG-HWA*, ENAMELLED PORCELAIN WITH YELLOW BODY-COLOUR.

(Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 5 inches. (See page 192.)



specimens. It may be confidently asserted that all the highly valued yellows of the *Hung-chih* and later *Ming* epochs were of the transparent type. There do indeed survive pieces undoubtedly from the kilns of that dynasty which, though of fine, delicate porcelain, have their colour in the form of a thin wash applied after the biscuit had been baked. But these are to be placed in an entirely inferior grade. The specimens depicted in H'siang's Catalogue belonged beyond question to the former class, though of course their distinguishing characteristic of shell-like translucidity does not appear in the illustrations. The manufacture of this fine yellow continued throughout the industrially active eras of the *Ming* dynasty. Even as late as the *Wan-li* period (1578–1619) excellent specimens were produced, having the year-mark written in deep, full-bodied blue under the glaze. But the manufacture of yellow monochromes seems to have been very limited. In the imperial porcelain requisitions for the years 1529 (*Chia-ching* era) and 1573 (*Wan-li* era), among a multitude of other wares such monochromes are mentioned only twice: in the former year "boxes with dragons and phœnixes engraved under a yellow glaze," and in the latter "teacups yellow inside and out, with clouds, dragons, and fairy flowers faintly engraved under the paste." Yellow, when specified elsewhere, appears as an enamel, being used to paint dragons, phœnixes, and floral scrolls surrounded by blue or brown grounds, or itself forming a ground surrounding designs in blue, or a field for coloured enamels.

It need scarcely be said that genuine examples of yellow monochromes dating from the *Ming* dynasty are almost unprocurable. But from the *Kang-hsi* era

(1662) down to the closing years of the eighteenth century this delicate glaze was manufactured successfully and in larger quantities. There were various tones, from pale lemon to deep straw-colour, though only two were specially distinguished, light yellow (*Hiao-hwang*) and golden yellow (*Chin-hwang*). Small pieces, as bowls, cups, censers, miniature vases, and so forth, were chiefly produced. Occasionally crackle was added, but in the great majority of cases the potter confined his decoration to incised designs of a comparatively simple character, the perpetual dragon figuring prominently. It is unfortunate that this beautiful glaze was not employed in the manufacture of more important pieces, for its delicacy and softness can scarcely be over-estimated. The experts of the *Tsing* dynasty, however, preferred to produce the thicker variety, in which the colour, applied to the surface of the biscuit after stoving, presents an opaque, dull appearance. Not a few fine specimens of this class survive. They are usually modelled after the fashion of bronzes, having fluted or diapered surfaces and handles shaped into grotesque monsters. Yellow is the sovereign colour of the *Tsing* dynasty, and it may be for that reason that yellow monochromes are comparatively uncommon. Porcelains having designs in green in a yellow field of the opaque type are more numerous. Western connoisseurs often distinguish them by the title of "Imperial Ware," though they have no special claim to be thus honoured.

The yellow *craquelé* mentioned above must be distinguished from the so-called "mustard yellow" of Occidental collectors. The latter is of the inferior type; its colour being an opaque enamel applied to the stoved biscuit. The surface is covered with a network of fine crackle, and there is an absence usually of lustre and always of transparency. Many technically faulty examples of "mustard yellow," dating from the *Taou-Kwang* (1821–1851), and especially the *Hien-fung*, era (1851–1862), have found their way into European and American collections, and are valued far above their true merits.

In the *Kang-hsi* era, under the direction of the celebrated potter Tang, a peculiar yellow glaze was manufactured. It ranked among the Imperial Wares (*Kuan-yao*) of the time and has always been highly esteemed. The *pâte* is not porcelain proper, but very fine stone-ware, always thick and solid, and the glaze is distinguished as "eel-yellow," *Shan-yu-hwang*, from its supposed resemblance to the colour of an eel's belly. It is an opaque glaze, having comparatively little lustre and owing its colour to a dust of minute yellow speckles, so close and fine as to be imperceptible without very careful examination. Beautiful as this monochrome undoubtedly is, it does not immediately command appreciation, being less remarkable for brilliancy of surface or richness of colour than for combined softness, solidity, and peculiarity. It is never associated with other colours or enamels. It was manufactured successfully by the *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* experts, but potters of a later era seem to have been quite unable to produce it. Good specimens generally have the mark of their period incised in seal character on the base.

A colour which, though not strictly monochromatic, may be conveniently included in this section, is the *Hwang-tien-pan*, or "spotted yellow." This is also of the *Kuan-yao*, or imperial class: indeed the author of the *Tao-lu* ranks it first among the four choicest varieties of the *Kang-hsi* era. Like the "eel-yellow," it has solid *pâte* of fine stone-ware, over which is run a dark olive green glaze, covered, more or less thickly, with yellow speckles. Sometimes the green predominates, sometimes the yellow, and sometimes the latter appears in the form of flecks rather than spots. In this last case a close resemblance to patinated bronze is discernible and was doubtless intended, since the glaze is often associated with designs, incised or in relief, copied from old bronzes and occasionally picked out with gold. In the choicest examples the yellow spots appear like a dappling of gold floating in the glaze. Specimens of this latter nature are immensely prized by the Chinese. There is no record to show when either the "eel-yellow" or the "spotted-yellow" was invented. They first appear among the "Imperial Wares" of the *Kang-hsi* era, and, so far as is known, the composition of these curious and difficult colours must be attributed to the genius of Tang. It seems reasonable to conclude that had glazes so remarkable been manufactured during the *Ming* dynasty, some account, written or traditional, would have been preserved of them. After the *Chien-lung* era they ceased to be produced with success. They have always been highly esteemed in Japan, where they are known as *Soba-yaki* (buckwheat ware), probably in allusion to the colour of cakes made of that grain, or, as some assert, to the green and yellow aspect of a ripening crop of the cereal.

In a catalogue of Ching-tê-chên keramic productions quoted by the *Tao-lu*, mention is made of "yellow vases of the European type." The reference is to the lemon yellow of the Famille Rose porcelains, the colours of which were first employed towards the end of the reign of *Kang-hsi*, either as monochromes or for painting over the glaze.

PURPLE.

Purple was a favourite colour with Chinese potters from the tenth century downwards. In two of the celebrated wares of the *Sung* dynasty — the *Ting-yao* and the *Chün-yao* — purplish glazes occurred. The purple *Ting-yao* (*Tsu-Ting-yao*) is compared sometimes to ripe grapes, sometimes to the skin of the aubergine (*kia-pi*), while the purple *Chün-yao* is likened to the aubergine flower (*kia-hwa*), which is dusky indigo rather than purple. Indeed many of the so-called "purple monochromes" of China might be more properly described as dark blue or indigo. The illustrations in H'siang's Catalogue show that a true purple did appear in the *Ting-yao*, as may also be inferred from the fact that the glaze is compared to ripe grapes. But the same is not true of the *Chün-yao*. In truth the ideograph *tsu*, used by the Chinese to designate purple, has no distinct signification: it is employed of a colour varying from purple to nankeen brown. With some defining addition, as "aubergine purple," or "ripe-grape purple," a clear idea is conveyed, but when a Chinese writer merely says *tsu* or *hiao-tsu* (*tsu* of light tint), it is impossible to be quite sure of his meaning. The principal *Chün-yao* glaze was red: it is sometimes spoken of as *Mei-kwei-tsu*, or precious-garnet colour. In certain varieties, however, especially those manufactured by the *Kang-hsi* and *Yung-ching* potters, their appears a curious dusky indigo more or less permeated with red; an indescribable tint. The *Chün-yao* glaze was exposed to the full temperature of the porcelain kiln, but the purple of seventeenth and eighteenth century wares is an enamel applied to the biscuit after baking. It was employed by the Chinese keramists in most bizarre fashions; as for example, to cover the manes and tales, and even the bodies of Dogs of Fo, or the faces and breasts of mythological personages. In these cases it is usually associated with green, or turquoise blue. As a pure monochrome it is rare, especially in large pieces, and many connoisseurs hesitate to give it high rank among single-coloured porcelains owing to its glassiness and want of solidity. Nevertheless, fine examples are undoubtedly of great beauty and value. Their essential features are purity of colour, lustre and uniformity of surface, and close-grained, white *pâte*. Many of them have designs incised in the biscuit or in low relief. Occasionally, however, a glaze irreproachable as to texture and colour is run over dark, coarsish *pâte*; such specimens belong usually to the *Chia-tsing*, *Taou-kwang*, or *Hien-fung* kilns — *i.e.* to the period included between 1796 and 1862.

BLUE.

Just as the Chinese potter sought to imitate jade in his choicest green porcelain, so he took glass as a model for some of his finest purple and blue monochromes. He succeeded so perfectly that a specimen is occasionally seen having glaze scarcely distinguishable from glass in texture and lustre. Examples of this kind are highly and deservedly prized in China. They often perplex the tyro who discerns nothing to distinguish them from glass except their want of complete translucidity. Technical skill in the manufacture of glazes could scarcely be carried beyond the point reached by the makers of these beautiful porcelains.

Blue monochromes were largely manufactured in the second half of the *Ming* dynasty as well as in the Imperial workshops of the *Kang-hsi* and succeeding eras. Some varieties of *céladon* may be placed in this category, since the tint of their glaze approximates to blue rather than to green. But the subject of *céladon* has already been sufficiently discussed. Allusion is made here to blues essentially recognised as such by Western connoisseurs. There are seven principal varieties, namely, *soufflé* blue, azure blue, *clair-de-lune* or *lilac*, *lapis* blue, Mazarin blue, watered blue and "blue of the sky after rain."

The practice of applying colour to porcelain by insufflation undoubtedly dates from a very early period. In certain specimens of *Sung* dynasty *Chün-yao*, it is plain that this process was resorted to. The method has already been described in connection with *bleu sous couverte*, and it remains only to note here that some of the finest blue monochromes were thus manufactured. The blue of choice pieces is remarkable for depth and brilliancy, and the mottling of the surface, sometimes so minute as to be scarcely perceptible, sometimes bold and strong, lends charming softness to the glaze. In monochromes of this class large imposing specimens are quite exceptional, the *soufflé* blue in pieces of size generally serving as a field for coloured enamels, for decoration in gold, or for medallions enclosing designs in blue on a white ground. Bowls, cups, plates, and such objects constitute the bulk of obtainable monochromatic examples. As a full-bodied, deep, pure blue, their colour is unsurpassed. There is little if anything to choose between the three eras, *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* in the case of these porcelains, nor does the amateur run much risk of being deceived. The general tests of good ware are easily applied — close-grained *pâte*, lustrous uniform glaze, and careful technique.

Azure blue, or *Tien-lan*, is a colour of much lighter and more delicate tone than that last spoken of. No record exists as to the date of its earliest manufacture. The oldest examples in collections outside China belong to the *Kang-hsi* era, and it may be assumed with confidence that finer specimens were never produced. They vary in depth of colour. The palest and most delicate have large crackle, and a peculiar transparency of glaze which enables them to be easily distinguished. They are beautiful porcelains, much and deservedly esteemed in China, but they were never produced in large quantity, and the ability to produce them at all with success seems to have been lost after the close of the eighteenth century. Sometimes a glaze of this type is associated with clouds or splashes of blood red.

Lilac monochromes are generally supposed to have had their origin in the typical ware of the *Yuan* dynasty, described in a preceding chapter under the name of *Yuan-tsu*. The *clair-de-lune* glaze, however, which is the choicest variety of the family, occurs first on the inner surfaces of specimens of *Sung Chün-yao*, and sometimes, indeed, covers the whole piece. It will therefore be more correct to ascribe the conception of this beautiful monochrome to the *Sung* potters. In the *Yuan-tsu* it occurs either as a monochrome or associated with blood-red spots or clouds. It is a glaze of wonderful richness and softness, and some connoisseurs place it next in rank to the fine reds of *Pin-kwo-ts'ing*, *Lang-yao*, and *Chiang-tou-hung* porcelains. During the *Ming* dynasty excellent examples of it were produced at the Yang-chiang factory in Kwang-tung province. Their special beauty lay not alone in the delicate, velvety aspect of the glaze, but also in flashes of deeper colour breaking its uniformity. The impression conveyed is that a film of lighter tint overlies a ground of deep, steely blue. The *pâte* of this *Kwang-tung* ware, or *Kwang-yao*, is not porcelain, but a tolerably fine, reddish stone-ware, like its predecessors of the *Sung* and *Yuan* dynasties. The glaze is very thick, and its thickest portions, especially at the bottom of cups and bowls, show the profound, semi-transparent blue characteristic of the type. Vases or other large specimens of *clair-de-lune Kwang-yao* are very rare, but cups and bowls may be found without much difficulty. There is no doubt that, like the *Yuan-tsu* and *Sung Chün-yao*, the *Kwang-yao* was successfully copied by the Ching-têchên potters of the present dynasty; but inasmuch as its manufacture at Yang-chiang continued until the end of the eighteenth century, the great majority of surviving examples may be ascribed to the latter kiln. There are, as a rule, no marks, and the connoisseur must be guided by lustre of glaze, richness and delicacy of colour, fineness of *pâte*, and generally careful technique.

Belonging to the same family though easily distinguishable from the thick oily glazes of the *Kwang-yao*, are lilac monochromes manufactured at Ching-têchên during the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* eras, and known as *Yueh-pai*, or *blanc-de-lune*. These vary slightly in tint. The surface of the best examples shows exceedingly fine dappling — so microscopic as to be scarcely perceptible — apparently produced by the process of insufflation. The biscuit is thick and solid, but white and close-grained. Later specimens are marked by impurity of colour and more or less faulty technique; their lilac assumes a dusky shade, their *pâte* is comparatively coarse, and their glaze is often disfigured by pitting or blisters. The potters of the *Taou-kwang* and later eras were fond of using this impure lilac glaze as a field for designs — generally lions playing with balls — in maroon, brown, and black.

Lapis blue monochromes are among the rarest and choicest of the blue family. Their intense, brilliant colour justifies the esteem in which they were held. They were undoubtedly manufactured with success by the later *Ming* keramists, but the best examples familiar to Western collectors are from the *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* kilns. Not infrequently they have decorative designs — dragons, phœnixes, and so forth — finely engraved under the paste, and sometimes the monochrome is interrupted by yellowish white spots or veins, as though the potter had set himself expressly to imitate *lapis lazuli*. The best specimens have close-grained, white porcelain *pâte*, but even in pieces dating as far back as the close of the eighteenth century comparatively coarse brown biscuit is occasionally found.

Mazarin blue is the commonest monochrome of this family. With regard to period the same remarks apply to it as to *Lapis* blue. The points of excellence are velvet-like lustre of surface, depth and purity of colour, and microscopic dappling, showing that the colouring material has been applied by insufflation. Many porcelains of this class have colour so intense and full-bodied as to verge upon purple. Incised decoration is frequently added, and in pieces of comparatively modern manufacture the surface is often covered with designs in relief. Large quantities of porcelain having Mazarin blue glaze were manufactured in the *Taou-Kwang* era. They are generally disfigured by impurity of tone and clumsy technique, defects which become more marked the later the period of manufacture. Bowls having *céladon* glaze inside and deep dusky blue outside belong to this inferior category. A frequent though not essential characteristic of modern and faulty specimens is that the bottom of the piece, instead of being covered with white glaze, is unevenly smeared with a thin coat of dark brown pigment-like substance.

Watered blue, called by the Chinese *Chiao-ching*, is found on the outer surface of finely manipulated specimens of porcelain, the interior of which is covered with pure white glaze, sometimes having beautifully executed designs incised and in relief. The method of manufacturing this monochrome was to add native silicate of cobalt to the ordinary white glaze. According to the proportion of cobalt various hues of colour resulted. Choice examples generally date from one of the three great eras — *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* — of the present dynasty, for though the *Chiao-ching* was certainly produced in the *Ming* factories also, pieces of that period do not seem to have survived in appreciable numbers.

The colour known in China as "blue of the sky after rain" (*u-kwo-tien-ts'ing*) has already been spoken of in connection with *céladon*. There can be little doubt that the colour originally conceived under this name showed a strong tinge of green. But the potter of the three great eras of the present dynasty produced a porcelain bearing no resemblance to *céladon* which has come to be known as "blue of the sky after rain." It is a hard-paste porcelain, fine-grained, excellent in every technical detail, and covered with a monochromatic glaze of the utmost lustre and delicacy. The colour is light cerulean. This ware commands the admiration of Chinese virtuosi. The year-mark is generally found on the bottom of fine pieces in seal character, blue *sous couverte*.

All the above varieties of blue monochromes were manufactured at the full heat of the porcelain kiln, the colour being developed and the biscuit fired at the same temperature. There remains to be noticed another blue of very great beauty, exceptionally appreciated by Western connoisseurs, which, being applied to the surface of ware already baked, was subjected only to the temperature of the enameller's furnace. This is the colour called "Turquoise Blue" by Europeans, but in China known as *Tsui-se*, or the blue of the king-fisher's feathers. It was obtained from an oxide prepared by mixing old copper and saltpetre with water. The manufacture dates from the *Ming* dynasty. In one of the imperial requisitions for porcelains to be used at the palace during the *Lung-ching* era (1567–1572), bowls and plates covered with *Tsui-se* glaze are included. But the colour is not mentioned in any record of choice wares manufactured earlier than the sixteenth century. It is certainly one of the most delicate yet brilliant of Chinese monochromes. Genuinely fine specimens have become exceedingly scarce, though their production was continued with success until the end of the *Chia-tsing* era (1796–1821). They are close-grained, hard porcelain, with soft lustrous glaze of perfectly uniform turquoise blue, and having decorative designs — dragons and phœnixes — engraved in the *pâte*. Crackle is absent and the technique is unimpeachable. It is important to notice these two points — the nature of the *pâte* and the absence of crackle — if the amateur desires to distinguish between the very choicest specimens and those of second-rate quality. The variety having fine porcelain *pâte* covered with uniform "king-fisher" glaze of delicate tint with designs carefully engraved in the biscuit, ranks among Imperial Wares (*Kuan-yao*) in Chinese eyes. An inferior though scarcely less beautiful description has a net-work of fine crackle and comparatively soft biscuit with a timbre resembling that of faience rather than of porcelain proper. In this kind engraved designs are exceptional, but decoration in high relief occurs not infrequently. Sometimes the uniformity of the surface is broken by metallic spots, large or small, producing a highly pleasing effect. Turquoise glazes are also found upon reddish brown stone-ware, thin but comparatively coarse. Such specimens are either to be classed as third-rate examples of *Chien-lung* and *Chia-tsing* manufactures, or to be attributed to the workshops of *Taou-Kwang* (1821–1851) and subsequent eras. Many of them possess great decorative attractions.

It should be explained that in insisting upon the absence of crackle the intention is merely to note a feature of the one and only variety of "king-fisher" glaze to which Chinese connoisseurs give a place among Imperial Wares. Many Western collectors will doubtless hold that the close, circular "fish-roe" crackle commonly seen on good pieces of turquoise blue is an additional charm. It is at all events certain that among the latter are to be found numerous specimens of great merit. Many of them are modelled after ancient bronzes, not only the shapes of the latter but also their designs, incised and in relief, being accurately reproduced. The Chinese potters were also fond of using turquoise blue as a body colour in statuettes of sacred personages and mythical animals. In such cases they often combine it with purple and occasionally with yellow and white glazes, sacrificing every principle of congruity to their love of rich, striking tints. It is curious that this prostitution of beautiful materials and skilled technique to barbaric conceptions should have found so much favour with Western collectors. Jacquemart mentions that ware of this description was much prized in France at the end of the last century. He instances small pieces which were sold at auction for prices ranging from 340 to 1,800 francs, and adds that, in his own time (1875), a vase decorated with a group of carp in violet swimming among aquatic plants in turquoise blue fetched as much as 3,000 francs. Purchasers of such pieces cannot be said to have attached much value to artistic congruity.

As a rule only the choicest variety of the "kingfisher" monochrome is marked; the mark generally being a year period engraved in seal character.

GREEN.

At the head of green monochromes stands *céladon*, at once the oldest and most prized ware in the Orient. To this variety, however, it is unnecessary to refer again in detail. Distinct from it is the *Ta-lü*, or deep green, which, according to the records, was manufactured in considerable quantities during the twelfth century. Specimens of this early period *Ta-lü* do not appear to have been preserved in China, but in Japan examples are found that may be regarded as fairly typical. They are chiefly in the form of tiles used for roofing the palace at Kyôtô at the time of its reconstruction after a conflagration in the twelfth century. The tiles are of pottery, having red *pâte* over which is run green glaze of considerable lustre and brilliancy. By the Japanese such ware was ascribed to Cochin China and known as *Kôchi-yaki*, but that they misconceived its origin there can be no doubt. It is plain, of course, that the Chinese keramist would not have put his best work into tiles. The Kyôtô specimens serve only to show that the potters of the *Sung* dynasty understood the production of *couleurs de demi-grand feu*, for the green glaze was evidently applied to the biscuit after baking and developed at a comparatively low temperature. Even the most carefully manufactured pieces of this ware cannot have possessed value in the eyes of Chinese connoisseurs. It is not classed among the choice productions of the *Ming* era, and its representative of the present dynasty is a porcelain of little merit, having a glaze that often lacks uniformity and purity. The *Ta-lü*, whether ancient or modern, had no crackle, properly so-called, though the glaze occasionally showed accidental fissures. Dismissing this variety, therefore, as unworthy of further attention, it remains to notice three principal kinds of choice green; namely, apple green (*Pin-kwo-ts'ing*), peacock green (*Kang-tsiao-ts'ing*), and cucumber-rind green (*Kwa-pi-lü*).

It has already been explained that the term *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* (green of the water-shield) is applied by the Chinese to a ware of which the dominant colour is generally red. But the same term has come to be used of a green monochrome arbitrarily called "apple green" by foreign collectors. This ware owes its beauty to purity and delicacy rather than to richness. It invariably has large crackle, of the "starred-ice" type, and without such crackle would lose much of its charm. The inside of good specimens has thick, creamy white glaze, which also is *craquelé*. "Apple green" has the merit of being a *couleur de grand feu*; that is to say, the colour is incorporated with the glaze and developed at the full temperature of the porcelain kiln. No mention is made of this ware among the noted productions of the *Ming* potters. The fine specimens by which it is now known date from one of the three great periods of the present dynasty, *Kang-hsi*, *Young-ching* and *Chien-lung*, but many passable pieces were manufactured during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The tint of the peacock green is well described by its name: it is the full, dark, glowing colour seen on the neck and back feathers of the peacock. This variety differs essentially from apple green in being a colour developed at the low temperature of the decorator's furnace. It ranks, in fact, with turquoise blue — or king-fisher blue — for a dark kind of which it is sometimes mistaken. Not infrequently the two colours occur in combination, the turquoise blue appearing as clouds or broad streaks among the peacock green. There is crackle of varying fineness, and the *pâte* of the choicest specimens is close-grained, white porcelain. From the second half of the *Chien-lung* era until the middle of the nineteenth century (*Taou-kwang* era) an inferior, dark, pottery *pâte* was often used, though the glaze and colour were of a high order of merit. That peacock green was among the monochromes produced during the *Ming* dynasty is proved by the lists of wares requisitioned for imperial use at that epoch, rice-bowls and saucers of peacock-green colour being among the articles mentioned in the requisitions of the *Lang-ching* era (1567–1572).

The cucumber-rind green is perhaps best known to Western collectors and most highly esteemed by them. It is a dark, opaque colour, rich, full-bodied, and lustrous. The glaze is finely crackled. What has been said with regard to the *pâte* of turquoise blue and peacock green applies to this variety also; namely, that the choicest specimens have fine porcelain biscuit, pottery of varying coarseness being a mark of comparatively modern and inferior technique. In the *Tao-lu* there is mention of three kinds of "imperial ware," produced during the *Kang-hsi* era under the direction of the celebrated Chang. Two of these — eel-skin yellow and olive-green spotted with yellow — have already been described. The third is called "snake-skin green" (*Shê-pi-lü*), a term said to have been applied at that time to the glaze subsequently known as "cucumber-rind." Cucumber-rind green of really fine quality is one of the rarest colours to be found in the Chinese bric-à-brac market.

Another variety of green is the *Chiao-lü*, or light green, a grass tint, partially transparent, having metallic lustre, and generally showing iridesence. The glaze on this ware is thin and the *pâte* fine porcelain. Incised decoration is usually added, the colour not lending itself happily to the purposes of a perfectly plain monochrome. The *Chiao-lü* does not rank with choice wares, except when it occurs in combination with other colours or with enamel decoration.

The rarest of all the green monochromes is the "crab-shell green," or *Hiai-chia-ts'ing*. It is difficult to add anything to the description embodied in the name of this curious ware. The colour is a somewhat impure mottled green, showing with remarkable accuracy the partial translucidity of a crab's shell. Hard, fine-grained *pâte* and all the technical qualities indicate most careful manipulation. So few are the genuine specimens still surviving, that it seems almost misleading to place them in a separate category. Nothing is on record as to the history of the ware, but the rare example seen in China seem to belong to the *Kang-hsi* or *Yung-ching* era.

The last and appreciable kind of green resembles the *Chiao-lü* in tint, but is fuller and more opaque. The glaze of this variety is thick and the majority of the specimens date from the latter half of the *Chien-lung* era, and from the *Chia-tsing*, *Taou-kwang*, or even later periods. The ware deserves no special mention, being simply porcelain covered with thick, lustreless and uninteresting grass-green glaze, often tricked out with ill-fired gilding.

BLACK.

From early times black glazes occupied the best attention of the Chinese potter. They are found on both the *Ting-yao* and the *Chien-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty. The *Mo-Ting-yao*, or black *Ting*, is little known to Western connoisseurs. The one specimen illustrated in H'siang's Catalogue goes to show that the ware was rather brown than black, not showing any of the depth or brilliancy usually supposed to be characteristic of a fine black monochrome. In this respect the *Chien-yao* — of which, with its inferior variety, the *U-ni-yao*, mention has been made already — possessed greater attractions. Its deep, lustrous black, showing tints of raven's-wing green and marked iridescence, its silvery lines and delicate dappling, render it one of the most interesting productions of the Chinese keramist. The manufacture of the original *Chien-yao* came to an end in the *Yuan* dynasty, and when the factory renewed its activity under the Ming emperors, its outcome assumed a wholly different character. No attempt to reproduce either this ware or the black *Ting* seems to have been made, nor is there any record that black glazes were in vogue during the *Ming* dynasty. On the whole, therefore, it seems justifiable to conclude that from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century monochromes of this class did not receive marked attention. Their manufacture was resumed, however, in the *Kang-hsi* era when two principal varieties were produced. The first was "metallic black," called *U-chin;* the second "mirror black," called *U-ching*. The former of these names is not accurately descriptive. For in the "metallic black" two tolerably distinct kinds are found: a thin glaze having the sheen of metal, its surface often showing iridescent hues of dark green or blue, and a more solid glaze of *noir-mat* type. The "mirror black" is happily named, being a deep, soft colour, glossy, polished, and reflecting images like a mirror. M. d'Entrecolles, speaking of mirror black, says:—"This black is produced by dipping the porcelain in a liquid mixture of prepared azure. It is not essential that the best blue should be employed, but it should be a little thick, and it must be mixed with glazing material obtained from powdered petrosilex, to which is added "dead-leaf" glaze with some lime and fern ashes. No other glaze is applied. In stoving this species of ware, it must be placed in the middle of the kiln and not where the temperature is highest." This process would evidently have given a pure black monochrome, and in point of fact many beautiful specimens of perfectly uniform, glossy black porcelain were thus produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But M. d'Entrecolles' description tells nothing of a feature that distinguishes the choicest variety of mirror black, namely, the addition of golden speckles. Strictly speaking, such ware should not be classed with monochromes, but the dust of gold speckles floating in the glaze is so fine that it conveys an impression of sheen and softness rather than of colour. Examples of this charming ware are very rare. Like the blue-and-white *Kai-pien-yao* and several of the most prized monochromes, their *pâte*, is seldom pure white porcelain, but close-grained, reddish stone-ware. This is an interesting point for the connoisseur; and it may be supplemented by saying that generally in the choicest pieces of mirror black neither the bottom nor the inner surface has white glaze. These parts are either covered with the same black glaze as that seen on the rest of the specimen, or they have a warm brown glaze. The presence of white glaze, however, is not to be regarded as condemning a piece. It is found on the bottoms and interiors of many specimens of mirror black which, but for the absence of golden speckles, would rank high among monochromes. These are further distinguished by their *pâte* of true porcelain. As for the *U-chin*, or metallic black, the duller variety of it is typically seen in the the "Black Hawthorns" and black grounds with enamelled decoration so highly prized by Western collectors, as well as in numerous but decidedly inferior productions of the *Kang-hsi*, and subsequent eras, where the black surface is ornamented with an imperfectly fired tracery of gold. Close inspection of these various specimens of *U-chin* will generally disclose a greenish tinge, more or less marked and plainly due to defective technique. The more brilliant variety, on the other hand, is either pure black, or if it has any tints of green and blue, owes them to iridescence. This latter glaze is found, for the most part, on very thin, delicately manufactured specimens of fine porcelain — chiefly bowls and plates — dating from the *Yung-ching*, and *Chien-lung* eras. In the "Catalogue of Ching-tê-chên Manufactures" contained in the "Annals of Fu-liang," and quoted in M. Julien's "Porcelain Chinoise," it is distinguished as "email noir mat de l'Europe" and is characterised as a new production, which last term is also applied to vases having gold decoration on a black ground.

There appears to have been comparatively little difficulty in manufacturing black glaze of a certain merit. Many specimens made during the nineteenth century, though sombre and heavy, are often purchased by collectors as genuine examples of choice old mirror black. They are invariably of common, inelegant shapes, and indications of faulty technique may be detected either in air-bubbles and pitting in the glaze, or in crude, ill manipulated biscuit. Examples of black monochromes older than the present dynasty are scarcely ever to be found in the hands of Chinese bric-à-brac dealers. They are much commoner in Japan, where the Tea Clubs always valued them highly and preserved them carefully.

BROWN.

A monochrome of great merit is the *Tzü-chin*, or golden brown. This is the *fond laque* of French connoisseurs. It has also been called "dead-leaf" glaze, a term which fairly describes its colour but conveys a false idea of its gloss and brilliancy. It is of considerable antiquity, being found on the *Chien-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty, where it is used either as a monochrome on the outer surface of cups and bowls, or as a ground for bluish white spotting and dappling. Its manufacture was revived under the *Ming* dynasty. The fact is mentioned in the "History of Ching-tê-chên Wares," and among the articles requisitioned for imperial use in the *Lung-chin* era (1567–1612) there are included rice-bowls of deep brown, and light golden brown, with dragons faintly engraved under the glaze. This question of date deserves special notice, because M. d'Entrecolles erroneously speaks of the *Tzü-chin* as a new invention of his time (1715). For the rest, his note on the subject is interesting and instructive. "There is another glaze," he writes, "called *Tzü-chin-yu*, that is to say, golden brown. I should be disposed to call it rather glaze of the colour of coffee, or bronze or dead leaves. To make it, common yellow clay is taken and treated after the manner of porcelain earth. Of this only the finest parts are employed. They are thrown into water, and formed into a sort of paste as liquid as the purest white glazing material prepared from petrosilex. The two — *i.e.* the material obtained from the yellow clay and that from petrosilex — have to be subsequently mixed, and in order to determine whether they have been brought to the same degree of consistency, bricks of porcelain are dipped into them, and the marks of the liquids on the bricks in each case are compared. To the combined liquids there is further added a compound of lime and fern ashes, which has been brought to a similar state of consistency. The proportions in which the three are mixed depend upon the nature of the colour which it is desired to produce. . . . At one time it was customary to manufacture cups with this golden brown glaze outside, and a pure white glaze on the inner surface. Subsequently the method was varied, and when a vase was to receive the *Tzü-chin-yu*, small spaces, round or square, were covered beforehand with moistened paper. After applying the glazing material, these papers were removed, and the unglazed spaces thus reserved were decorated with red or blue. When the porcelain was dry it received the usual colourless, translucid glaze, either by immersion or insufflation. Some artists filled the reserved medallions with an uniform ground of azure or black, with the intention of applying designs in gold after the first stoving."

M. Salvétat says that French keramists have experienced no difficulty in imitating the *Tzü-chin* glaze, but in China and Japan its production has never been deemed easy. The celebrated *Hao Shih-chu*, who flourished at the end of the sixteenth century, is said to have been remarkable for his skill in manufacturing monochromes of this kind. The colour varies from chocolate to light brown. Decoration in white slip was often added with excellent effect. In comparatively modern and valueless pieces the *Tzü-chin* often covers outside surfaces while the interiors have a glaze of impure mazarine blue or green. Specimens of brown monochromes are seldom of large dimensions. Rice-cups, bowls, plates, and small vases are the usual examples. Good pieces generally have designs engraved under the glaze.

Chapter XI

POLYCHROMATIC GLAZES

TRANSMUTATION OR FLAMBÉ GLAZES

THERE are many varieties of Chinese porcelain and stone-ware the glaze of which shows more than one colour. Indeed, some of the porcelains included above in the monochromatic family would, if more strictly classified, find a place in the present chapter — as, for example, *Lang-yao* with bright flashes or dark spots in the red field; king-fisher blue and peacock green with metallic dappling; *Chüng-yao* with red hawthorn and *clair-de-lune* glazes; metallic black with green and blue iridescence; mirror black with gold dusting; olive green with yellow spots; the red *Pin-kwo-ts'ing* glaze with plum-green clouding, and so forth. It has not been deemed advisable, however, to enter these in the polychromatic category, inasmuch as the marked predominance of their principal colour has always led collectors to regard them as monochromes. For this section, therefore, are reserved only those glazes in which two or more colours are distinctly visible. Of these the most remarkable, and perhaps the most beautiful, is the *Yao-pien*, or ware "transmuted in the furnace," called by French connoisseurs "*Flambé*." M. d'Entrecolles refers to this curious product thus: — "I have been shown a piece of porcelain called *Yao-pien*, or ware transmuted in the kiln. The transmutation was caused by deficiency or excess of temperature, or by other agencies difficult to fathom. This piece, which is not a success according to the potter's notion, and which is the result of chance, is none the less beautiful or less esteemed. The intention of the potter was to make vases with red *soufflé* glazes. A hundred pieces were entirely spoiled. That of which I speak emerged from the kiln with an appearance like agate. If the risk and expense of trials could be borne, the art would doubtless be discovered of accomplishing with certainty that which chance now achieves once in a while. It was thus that the potters proceeded in the case of mirror-black glaze. The caprice of the furnace impelled them to make the essay, and it succeeded." There is little room for doubt that M. d'Entrecolles was partially deceived in this matter. He certainly saw a piece of accidentally "transmuted" ware, but it by no means follows that all *Yao-pien-yao* was accidentally transmuted. In the "Annals of Fu-liang" there is included among the glazes manufactured at Ching-tê-chên an "oil green" (*Yu-lu*), the origin of which is ascribed to the "ancient vases called *Yao-pien*," and which is spoken of as an "antique and fine glaze." This alone would suffice to dispose of the idea that the ware was invented at the beginning of the eighteenth century, while M. d'Entrecolles was in China. There are in fact many fine specimens dating unquestionably from the *Ming* period. The original discovery was probably due to accident, and in subsequent times many pieces must often have been produced under unforeseen conditions of temperature. But that they were also manufactured intentionally scarcely admits of question. M. Jacquemart, writing on the subject of *Yao-pien*, or *flambé*, ware, says:—"As for the cause of the transmutation, modern science knows it so well that each of its effects can be obtained with certainty in the laboratory. Metals change their condition and appearance according to their combination with oxygen. Thus, to confine ourselves to the question under consideration, oxydised copper gives a beautiful red vitrifiable enamel, which, thrown *en masse* on the surface of a vase, forms the tint called *haricot*. With another equivalent of oxygen, it becomes protoxide, and produces a beautiful green, capable of being changed into celestial blue when the oxygenation is pushed a little farther. Now these various combinations can be accomplished suddenly in the kiln by bold *tours de main*. When a clear fire, placed in a quick draught, draws in a large volume of air, all the oxygen is not consumed, and a portion can enter into combination with the fusing metals. If, on the other hand, there be passed into the oven thick smoke whose carbonaceous mass, thirsting for oxygen, absorbs everywhere this gas essential to combustion, the oxides may be destroyed and the metal completely restored. Subjected at a given moment to these different conditions by the rapid and simultaneous introduction of currents of air and sooty vapours, the *haricot* glaze assumes at last a most picturesque aspect. Veined colours, changing, capricious as the flames of alcohol, diaper the surface; the oxydised red, passing by violet to pale blue and green protoxide, even disappears completely on salient points which have become white, and thus furnishes happy accidents. And since the Chinese, as in the case of *craquelé*, are so sure of their technique that they can manufacture one pair of vases in which red predominates, and another of which the almost blue ground is strewn with red and lilac flames, they also make statuettes with the flesh colour disappearing under blue or green garments; or tea-pots in the shape of a peach, having a blue base, a violet body, and a bright red top." M. Jacquemart's enthusiasm carries him a little too far; it leads him to class with *Yao-pien* ware specimens, in the manufacture of which different glazes were applied to different parts. Otherwise, his description of the varied effects shown by this remarable ware is vivid and excellent. In China the *Yao-pien* is compared to the variety of jade called *Pih*, some kinds of which are bluish and others have a greenish tinge like the deep sea. The potter's object was to imitate the cloudy, spotted appearance of this beautiful stone, and he often succeeded admirably. The author of the "Annals of Fu-liang" compares the *Yu-lu* or *Yao-pien* glaze to precious green jade the brilliant heart of which is flecked with white. This description conveys a good idea of the choicest *Yao-pien:* the glaze seems to be transparent, and clouds or flecks of colour float in its depths.

Passing from this general description to special varieties, note may first be taken of the *Lan-yao-pien*, or blue *Yao-pien*. This glaze illustrates an interesting fact; namely, that the Chinese nomenclature is systematic. It includes in the *Yao-pien* class practically all glazes the colours of which are in any respect due to accidental conditions of firing. The *Lan-yao-pien* is evidently a ware of which the manufacture was managed with virtual uniformity of results. The colouring material was applied by insufflation, and the outcome was a bluish grey or slate ground marbled with dark brown and showing a rosy tinge. All the tones of colour, however, varied slightly according to the conditions of the kiln, and hence the name "*Yao-pien*" is appropriate. The best specimens of this variety appear to date from the *Yung-ching* era (1723–1736), but as a general rule the *Yao-pien* porcelains of the *Chien-lung* potters yield to none of their predecessors in technical excellence.

The *Lu-yao-pien*, or green transmutation ware, is a choicer and rarer variety than the last. Its body colour is transparent green, passing into azure or purple, and over these fields floats a dappling or net-work of brown ochre. The glaze conveys an impression of thickness and depth, but is in reality applied in a moderately liquid condition. The technique is excellent, the *pâte* — as is also the case with the *Lan-yao-pien* — being fine porcelain. The best examples of both varieties usually have a year-mark impressed in seal character. There is no positive evidence to show that either the *Lan-yao-pien* or the *Lu-yao-pien* was produced during the *Ming* dynasty, though the statement quoted above from the "Annals of Fu-liang" with reference to "oil green," probably indicates a similar glaze.

Differing from both of the above sufficiently to be easily distinguished, is a variety of *Yao-pien* to which American collectors have applied the term "Robin's-egg glaze," but which in China has the name *Chiun-tien*, or "imperial spotted ware." As is the case with every class of transmutation ware, no two specimens of this variety are exactly alike. The choicest kind is tolerably well described by the American appellation. Its ground colour is light claret or brownish red, over which is run, in flakes and flecks, delicate bluish green; or this order is reversed, the ground being liquid green in which float spots of russet-red or dusky claret. The general effect is very charming. Frequently the bluish green colour appears as fine, uniform mottling — a comparatively tame and uninteresting style which was doubtless easily achieved by the process of insufflation, and which ranks decidedly below the glazes with fleecy and marbled variegation. Choice examples of this ware generally have a year-mark impressed in seal character. Their biscuit is close-grained, white porcelain, but the rim at the base is usually covered with black or reddish brown glaze. Nothing is recorded about the date when the ware was first produced. No specimens older than the *Kang-hsi* era appear to be in existence, and on the whole it seems reasonable to conclude that the manufacture reached its highest point of excellence in the *Yung-ching period* (1723–1736), since the finest pieces bear the year-mark of that period, and since, speaking generally, it is established that the *Yung-ching* potters directed their attention specially to polychromatic glazes.

There is great difficulty in determining the limits of the name "*Yao-pien*." Every attempt to classify involves incompleteness. Take the *Lu-yao-pien* (green *Yao-pien*) for example. The description given above is general and fairly applicable, yet in rare cases it fails conspicuously. For in one variety the collector finds an exquisite purplish blush peeping out from among green and brown (or chocolate) marbling, as though the *Yung-ching* potter had taken the tints of the *Chün-yao* as a basis and supplemented them by the resources of his own more expert technique. The delicacy and richness of this variety would justify special classification if the collector could be sure of finding more than one or two specimens to which the same description was applicable. But that is precisely the difficulty. The conceptions of the keramist himself may have been tolerably definite, but in addition to the fact that their range was bewilderly wide, an element of chance entered into their realisation. Every conceivable nuance of colour had a charm for the Chinese potter. His inspiration, however, was generally taken from natural objects. Agate, coral, jasper, *lapis lazuli*, dead leaves, jade, the rind of fruits, grass, flowers, rice, plums, peaches, marble, and innumerable other models suggested tints which he successfully reproduced. If at one time his glazes recall fleecy green jade or the surface of a ripe peach, at another they appear to represent the geranium blossom, with its blending of velvety red and white. But it was inevitable that in this superposition or combination of various colouring materials, accidents of temperature and oxidisation should become a recognised factor. M. Jacquemart, as already seen, is disposed to resent the idea. To such an enthusiast it sounds almost sacrilegious to suggest that chance had anything to do with the success of the foremost technical keramists in the world. But there is another way of viewing the question. May not the Chinamen have understood that no artificial processes, however delicate and elaborate, could possibly be trusted to obtain the marvellous and never-ending variety and beauty which nature herself, represented by the capricious action of her forces in the furnace, was always ready to produce? He may have sought to exercise a general control over these forces, but he knew that the less he limited their influence, the wider was the range of his creative resources. This conception, to which doubtless is due the exquisite *Yao-pien* ware, with its graded tones, its colours blending with and merging into one another, its richness, depth, briliancy, softness, and glow, remained utilised, perhaps unappreciated by Western potters, until in recent years some of its effects were happily reproduced in the beautiful wares of Linthorpe and Haviland. The collector of Chinese porcelain and pottery owes to the *Yao-pien* the pleasure of knowing that his field is never exhausted. He may always hope to find novelties as charming as any of his most treasured familiars.

POLYCHROMATIC GLAZES OF THE RED FAMILY.

There are a number of polychromatic glazes which belong to the *Yao-pien* species inasmuch as no two of them are exactly alike, but which fall naturally into one class owing to the predominance of red in their colours. Of these the commonest though not the least beautiful, has two colours only, *clair-de-lune* and red. Generally the *clair-de-lune* appears as a ground colour, the red cropping out in rich fields and flashes; but sometimes this order is reversed, and sometimes again the *clair-de-lune* occupies a very secondary place, barely over-lapping the upper rim of a vase and thence running downwards in thin streaks. The ware is evidently a modification of the *Yuan-tsü*, described in a previous chapter, where clouds of carmine appear among a *clair-de-lune* environment. Some pieces, indeed, are plainly an imitation of the latter, and since the keramic skill of the

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POLYCHROMATIC GLAZES OF THE RED FAMILY.

VASE OF *YANG-CHING*, TIGER-SKIN PORCELAIN.
(Baron Iwasaki collection.) Height, 10 inches. (See page 341.)

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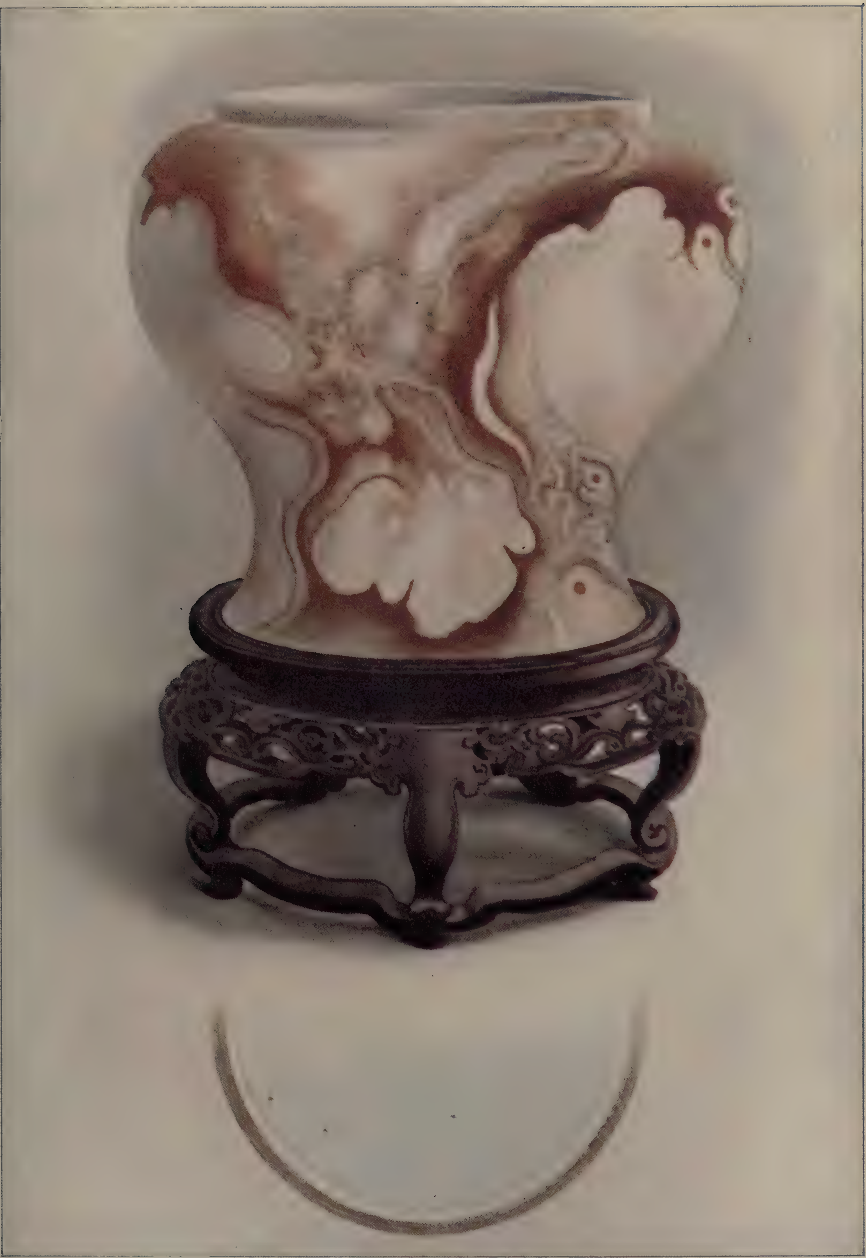

best periods of the present dynasty has been lavished upon them, they deservedly rank among choice productions of Ching-tê-chên. Many fine specimens of polychromes in which red predominates have *pâte* which is rather stone-ware than porcelain, and in some the biscuit, where exposed to the fire, shows a reddish brown colour. In fact high quality of *pâte* is not an essential criterion of excellence in such ware.

In another variety of this same genus the coloured glazes are run so regularly as to present a tesselated appearance. In such polychromes there is usually an addition of a third colour, a rich brown, which is often so skilfully managed that it seems to form a border of varying tone to the fields of red and *clair-de-lune*. The processes of these remarkable *tours de force* are still matter of conjecture. There was, in truth, scarcely any limit to the ability developed by the Chinese potter in manipulating his glazing material. A favourite device of his in the manufacture of red and white polychromes was to contrive that the flow of the red glaze should suffer the underlying white to crop out in more or less regular patterns, as for example a lotus blossom or a bunch of leaves. This particular class of conceit seems to have belonged to a comparatively late period, as it appears chiefly in wares dating from the closing years of the *Chien-lung* and to the *Chia-tsing* and *Taou-Kwang* eras. For the rest, the *Yung-ching* era (1723–1736) appears to have been the most successful time for polychromes of the red genus and indeed for all polychromatic glazes. Many grand specimens bear the year-mark of that era, impressed in seal character.

PEACOCK GREEN VARIEGATED WITH BLUE, AND TURQUOISE WITH METALLIC SPOTS.

A glaze of great decorative beauty was obtained by running deep rich blue, or indigo, over peacock green so that the surface of the latter seemed streaked or tesselated by the former. Of cognate type were glazes of turquoise — or king-fisher — blue variegated with metallic spots. In both these kinds lustre, fineness of crackle, and richness and variety of colour are easy tests of excellence. As a rule, however, the paste is inferior, for though light and thin, it belongs to the stone-ware class and shows a marked tinge of reddish brown. Such polychromes were manufactured with success up to so late a time as the *Taou-Kwang* era (1821–1851).

FANG–CHÜN–YAO.

The term *Fang-chün-yao*, or "imitation *Chün-yao*," is chiefly applied in China to ware of remarkable beauty, having soft, delicate *clair-de-lune* glaze among which float clouds of peach-bloom red; the latter not a solid colour but an agglomeration of tiny flecks and speckles, pervaded by a more or less distinct tinge of buff or light brown. It will at once be seen that this glaze might have been classed as a variety of the red polychromes described above, but owing to its peculiar merits and to the fact that Chinese connoisseurs specially distinguish it, it is here placed in a separate category. It is certainly one of the choicest among polychromatic glazes, considered either from the point of view of æsthetic delicacy or from that of decorative effect. That a certain element of accident entered into the manufacture is proved by the fact that no two specimens are exactly alike. Not only does the manner vary in which the clouds of red are disposed, but the colour also passes from rose to light claret, and is sometimes marked with metallic or agate-like flecks. Sometimes, again, the red, or brownish red, clouding is distributed more or less uniformly over the whole surface of the piece. This last type generally occurs in large specimens, and though very restful and charming, cannot be regarded as the choicest kind of *Fang-Chün-yao*. Another variety, very rarely seen, has its entire surface dappled with *clair-de-lune* and claret red. This *Fang-chün-yao* seems to have been a production of the *Yung-ching* potters. Its *pâte* is of fine texture, but opaque and showing a tinge of brownish red.

GRAINED GLAZES.

Attempts to classify wares offering such infinite varieties as the polychromatic glazes of China, necessarily involve some perplexity. In the above heading, however, care has been taken to follow the nomenclature of the Chinese themselves, who use the ideograph *siu*, or " grain," to distinguish three glazes of much merit and curiosity, namely, the *Chin-siu-hwa*, or " gold grained " glaze; the *Tung-siu-hwa*, or "copper grained" glaze, and the *Tieh-siu-hwa*, or " iron grained" glaze. In all three kinds the ground colour is brownish red, and in the glaze there appear to float scales or grains of gold, copper, or iron. The " gold grain " is rarest of the three and most highly esteemed. Its gold specks are plainly seen, held suspended in the glaze, seemingly in the form of pure metal, though it is not easy to conceive how their state of separation can have been maintained under the high temperature of the kiln. The "copper grain" variety ranks second. It does not show metallic graining as plainly as does the *Chin-siu-hwa,* but the justice of its appellation is at once recognised by the copper-like aspect of its dappling. The "iron grain" stands in the lowest grade, but is nevertheless a very interesting and attractive glaze. Sometimes the graining shows like the glistening of fractured iron pyrites; sometimes it appears as though fused iron were actually present in the glaze, and sometimes it takes the form of fine uniform dusting. All these glazes are thick and have little lustre. The idea of them was probably suggested by metallic ores. The great charm of vases of this type is appreciated only when they are actually used as receptacles for flowers. The rich glow of a peony or a chrysanthemum contrasts inimitably with glazes so subdued and unobtrusive. They are always applied to solid but fine stone-ware *pâte,* and year-marks, when present, are stamped in seal character. The best examples belong to the *Yung-ching* and *Chien-lung* eras.

CHECKERED GLAZE.

In this class are included all glazes where the colours are applied in regularly checkered patterns with straight edges. Such productions belong to a comparatively low grade of keramic art, and do not call for detailed mention. Green and white, or green and yellow are the commonest combinations of colour.

TORTOISE-SHELL GLAZE.

Both in China and in Japan the idea of manufacturing a glaze that should resemble tortoise-shell was successfully carried out. Specimens of this type are, however, very rare in Chinese productions, being confined to small pieces, as snuff-bottles or miniature vases. A canary-yellow or straw-coloured *craquelé* glaze with patches of rich brown, manipulated so carefully as to suggest the transparency of tortoise-shell, is applied to porcelain *pâte*, fine and white but solid. Difference of biscuit alone distinguishes Chinese ware of this class from the well known *bekko-de* of Japanese Satsuma faience. There is no difficuly in estimating the merits of a piece, for the technical contrast between the good and the inferior —*i.e.* between ware prior to 1820 and subsequent to it — can be detected in an instant.

TIGER-SKIN GLAZE.

Allusion has already been made to *Hu-pi*, or Tiger-skin glaze, as a ground for designs in vitrifiable enamels. It remains only to note that this beautiful glaze, the appearance of which is accurately described by its name, is used on choice wares without any decorative addition. It is not crackled, and the points of excellence are lustre and softness of surface, general faultlessness of technique, and dexterity of marbling and streaking. Vitreous crudeness of glaze and muddiness of colour may be at once taken as evidences of inferior and modern work.

LACQUERED PORCELAIN.

Brief allusion may be made here to a ware that does not fall into any of the classes hitherto discussed. It is porcelain decorated with lacquer. In France, where this curious keramic freak used to be admired, it goes by the name of "Porcelaine laquée burgautée," the term being derived from the shell called "burgau," under the dark surface of which a prettily variegated coat of mother-of-pearl is found. The decoration, in fact, consists of mother-of-pearl mosaics in lacquer, with which the surface of the porcelain is covered. There is no record that tells when this variety of ware first came into vogue in China, and since its decoration concerns the lacquerer not the keramist, it may be dismissed without further comment.

MODERN FLAMBÉ GLAZES.

Before concluding the subject of polychromes it is necessary to remind the amateur that during the past twenty or thirty years large quantities of *flambé* and "splashed" glazes have been manufactured in China, and that, being decorative, brilliant, and attractive, many of them are mistaken for choice specimens of good period. In general they are grey, lilac, or dusky blue, with clouds or streaks of red and patches of brown. Whatever may be said of the independent merits of these polychromes, without reference to their incomparably finer prototypes, they can always be identified by their muddy tone, fissure-like crackle, crude technique, and coarse, dark stone-ware *pâte*.

CRACKLE.

One of the most remarkable methods of decoration employed in China was that of crackle. Ware of this type was called *Sui-ki.* Its invention is ascribed to the potters of the province of Shen-si and to the early years of the twelfth century. The strong probability is that the so-called invention was in reality accidental. It is easy to conceive that where glazing material and *pâte* which differed sensibly in composition were exposed to the same degree of temperature in the kiln, the unequal expansion of the two broke the continuity of the glaze. Unable to conquer this tendency, the shrewd Chinaman conceived the idea of utilising it, and ultimately elaborated the conception to a high degree. Two methods of producing crackle are described in the *Tao-lu.* The first was to alter the composition of the glazing material by adding a certain quantity of steatite to it; the second, to sun-dry the glaze piece and then plunge it into cold water before stoving. A brown, red, or blue colour was imparted to the crackle by rubbing the surface of the vase, while still hot — that is to say, before the contraction of cooling had caused the edges of the crackle to close — with Indian ink, red ochre, or cobalt. Another practice, pursued in later times, was to re-heat the vase slightly and then dip it in a solution of colouring matter. By either method, but especially by the latter, not alone the crackle but also a portion of the adjoining surface of the glaze received a carmine tint. It is recorded of the brothers Chang, celebrated manufacturers of *Lung-chuan céladon* during the *Sung* dynasty, that the ware of the elder — distinguished as *Ko-yao* — was crackled, whereas that of the younger

— the typical *Lung-chuan-yao* — was without crackle, and from the remarks of some writers the inference may be drawn that the presence of crackle was regarded as a mark of inferiority. But such a verdict must not be accepted too literally. In the finest type of *céladon*, the delicate greenish azure monochrome so highly esteemed in China and Japan, crackle did not appear. But the illustrations in H'siang's Catalogue show that not alone all specimans of the *Ko-yao*, but many of the *Kuan-yao*, and even some of the *Ju-yao*, had crackle, and that in the case of the *Ko-yao* and the *Kuan-yao* the crackle was coloured with vermilion. Judging by the illustrations, it is plain that in the case of these wares the crackle, so far from being a defect, was distinctly an embellishment. Indeed, surviving specimens of *Ko-yao*, attributed by Chinese connoisseurs to the *Sung* factories, owe much of their beauty to the coloured net-work that covers their surface, spreading a multitude of tinted veins with fleecy edges over the brilliantly lustrous glaze. The *Ko-yao* became, in fact, the type of crackled porcelain to subsequent generations, and nowadays every fine specimen of buff, grey, or *céladon* monochrone having a strong crackled surface — whether the crackle be coloured or plain — is spoken of as *Fang-ko-yao*. Choice pieces of old *craquelé* have always and justly enjoyed a high reputation. The author of the *Tao-lu* mentions incidentally that, in his time (1815), a first-class specimen of old *craquelé* commanded from a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars in Japan. It was natural that a good number of pieces found their way into Japanese collections, where they are still carefully preserved. So expert did the Chinese keramist become in the management of crackle that he even applied bands of crackle alternately with bands of unbroken glaze. Fine specimens of this nature were manufactured during the *Chien-lung* era. A frequent type had grey, or light green, body glaze, distinctly crackled, while round the vase ran belts of chocolate glaze uncrackled but having incised diapers and leaf-fringes. Skilled technique and carefully prepared materials being essential to the successful manufacture of such vases, it is easy to distinguish the comparatively clumsy, crude outcome of the *Taou-kwang* and later kilns. Another and much rarer *tour de force* was to vary the nature of the crackle in one and the same glaze, preserving, however, sufficient uniformity to avoid any suggestion of accident. Thus the crackle round the upper part of a vase assumes a circular form, while below it is angular, the distinction being emphasised by a marked difference in the size of the two kinds of mesh. A technical curiosity of this kind is of course highly valued, but that it could be produced at will seems most improbable. It will of course be understood that in almost every case crackle is merely a decorative accessory. The one exception is white porcelain, the crackle of which constitutes its only ornament. In choice specimens of this variety the thick, lustrous glaze shows a faint tinge of buff, and the crackle is bold and strongly marked. Such porcelain, being admirably suited for flower vases, used to be esteemed in the East, but it is without delicacy, and can scarcely be classed among choice wares.

The above remarks apply only to crackle having large meshes, the "starred ice" variety. But a reader who has followed the descriptions given in previous pages of various kinds of porcelain, knows that many beautiful monochromes have their surface covered with a net-work of exceedingly fine crackle. Among wares thus distinguished special mention may be made of "cucumber-rind green;" "king-fisher green" (the turquoise blue of Occidental collectors); "peacock green;" "mustard yellow;" and certain specimens of *Ting-yao.* The crackle on the best examples of these wares takes the form known to French connoisseurs as "truitèe," the "fish-roe" of Chinese nomenclature. It is the same crackle as that seen in the *Satsuma* and *Kyomizu* faiences of Japan. The meshes are close, and the crackle polygonal or nearly circular. It is unnecessary to dwell upon this part of the subject further than to translate a few useful words from M. du Sartel's "Porcelaine de Chine:" — "On ancient specimens the crackle, generally very distinct and tinted black, traverses the whole thickness of the glaze the mass which is uniformly coloured. However numerous the cracks may be, they do not detract in any way from the smoothness of the surface. The solutions of continuity are so little appreciable to the touch that even when the finest pointed needle is passed over them they are virtually insensible. These little fissures, infinite in number, combine to form a net-work of apparent regularity, the meshes of which, almost uniform in size, are always polygonal, none of them ever taking a triangular shape. On modern products of a similar character manufactured in the Orient and in Europe, the crackle presents itself differently. It is, in the majority of instances, little marked, colourless, and scintillating. It appears to be superficial and to penetrate only into the vitreous colourless coat overlying the coloured glazes of recent manufacture. It may also be compared to the fissures produced on a glass by the flame of a candle brought too close to it. The net-work in which it envelops the vase is very irregular. The meshes are different in size and in appearance, and follow one another now in one fashion, now in another. Their contour often takes a quadrilateral or even a triangular form. Finally, each of the little fissures may be felt with the point of a needle which, if similarly applied to an antique vase, would pass over its surface uninterruptedly."

Chapter XII

CHINESE POTTERY

FROM what has been written in preceding chapters, it will be gathered that the distinction between pottery and porcelain in Chinese wares is not always so clearly marked as the amateur might anticipate. Between the extremes of hard-paste translucid porcelain and genuine pottery there are many varieties of soft-paste and stone-ware. In fact the keramist varied the composition of his *pâte* to suit the glaze he desired to apply to it. Even at an epoch when the processes of manufacturing hard-paste porcelain were thoroughly familiar to him, he preferred soft *pâte*, and sometimes stone-ware, as a ground for his choicest glazes or most delicate decoration. But though translucency and timbre were not points of special excellence in his estimation, he regarded pottery proper as a decidedly inferior product. Dr. Bushell writes thus:—"*Tsu* is defined in the older dictionaries as a fine, compact *tao*, pottery. It is distinguished from earthenware (*wa*) by the clear musical tone it gives when struck sharply with the finger nail. The term pottery, as with us, includes porcelain and earthenware, both glazed (*liu-li-wa*) and plain. Prince Kung, one day, admired a glazed Buddha from the ruins of the Summer Palace, taking it for old flambé porcelain, till he walked up and tapped it and exclaimed contemptuously '*Wa-te!*' (it is pottery). The Chinese have no word for stone-ware, and, in truth, there is no scientific distinction between these three substances, which pass into each other by imperceptible gradations." And yet it is evident from this very narrative that to the Chinese connoisseur there is nothing imperceptible in the difference which struck Prince Kung so forcibly. The truth is that while a stone-ware *pâte* and a translucid porcelain *pâte* are often difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish, especially when each is overlaid by thick glaze, no such confusion exists in China between either of these *pâtes* and pottery or faience in the Western sense of the terms. The latter was not largely manufactured in the Middle Kingdom, its principal uses being for glazed tiles and architectural ornaments. Numerous specimens of architectural ornaments in faience, as statues, mythical monsters, and so forth, existed in the Summer Palace at Peking, and a good example of glazed tiles is furnished by the celebrated "Porcelain Tower" of Nanking, the greater part of which consisted of glazed earthenware. The glazes most commonly found in decorative specimens of faience are green, yellow, turquoise blue, and purple, the two last being often combined. Ware of this type has already been spoken of in connection with "Three-colour Porcelain." Its place of production is the province of Shan-si, and specimens are still procurable without great difficulty. Their decorative and brilliant character have won them favour with amateurs, and many pieces are to be seen in European collections; as for example, vases with reticulated panels and designs in relief; others with scroll-pattern in relief on monochromatic ground of a different colour; censers or ornaments in the form of mythical animals, birds, rabbits, fabulous personages, and so forth, all remarkable for the profusion of bright turquoise, purple, and green enamels used in their decoration. Such ware, although for the most part faience, occasionally has genuine porcelain *pâte*, in which case it must be regarded as a Ching-tê-chên reproduction of the original Shan-si manufacture.

Two other types of faience have been mentioned in preceding chapters under the headings to which they belong respectively. They are the *Tsü-chou-yao* and the *Tu-Ting-yao;* the former easily recognised by its yellowish glaze and sparse decoration in black or brown; the latter, an imitation of the celebrated *Ting-yao* of the *Sung* dynasty. The heavier examples of the *Tu-ting-yao* came from the Kwang-tung factories, to which also is to be attributed another variety of faience or stone-ware, well known to Western collectors but often wrongly classed as "Transmutation Ware." This type of *Kwang-yao* owes its attractions entirely to the glaze. The *pâte* is red and opaque, varying in fineness but never rising above the level of stone-ware. The glaze, thick and lustrous, is generally deep blue speckled, flecked or clouded with white or green. Sometimes, however, the order of these colours is reversed: green becomes the prevailing tint, the blue looking out from beneath it in streaks or spots. In rare cases there is addition of yellow speckles, and in the choicest examples of all iron red with metallic sheen presents itself at the lips and shoulders of vases.

There is also a beautiful surface of blue or green marbled with white or speckled with red. The Kwang-tung potters seem to have experienced difficulty in the management of their baking processes, for their glazes often show blisters or lacks of continuity. The history of the factory is not accurately known, and as year-marks do not seem to have been employed at any time, there is little to guide in determining the age of a specimen. The only marks that occur are *Koh Min-tsiang-chi*, or more rarely *Koh Yuan-tsiang-chi*, signifying "made by Koh Min-tsiang or Koh Yuan-tsiang." These marks are stamped in the red or reddish brown paste on the unglazed bottom of a piece. The frequency of their occurrence shows that Koh Min-tsiang and Koh Yuan-tsiang must have played an important part in the manufacture of this species of *Kwang-yao*, but repeated investigations have failed to elicit any information about either of the men. In Japan, where under the name of *Namako* (*bêche-de-mer*, owing to the resemblance the variegated glaze bears to the appearance of the sea-snail), many excellent specimens have been preserved by collectors. The two Koh are said to have flourished at the close of the *Ming* dynasty, and the appearance of pieces thus marked tallies with this theory as to their age. It is at all events pretty certain that no example of *flambé Kwang-yao* dates from an earlier period than the sixteenth century, and that the great majority of those coming into the market are from kilns of the *Kang-hsi* or *Chien-lung* era.

Neither in China nor in the West has this variety of ware been much valued at any time, though its rich lustrous surface and play of fine colours ought to have brought it into notice. At all events the Ching-tê-chên experts thought it worthy of imitation, and succeeded so well that no attempt is made by Chinese connoisseurs to distinguish between the Kwang-tung originals and the Ching-tê-chên reproductions. Both have the same red, or reddish brown *pâte*, and both the same curiously mottled and often very beautiful glazes, unlike anything else in the range of Chinese keramics. Japanese connoisseurs attach great value to good specimens of *Kwang-yao*, the characteristics which they consider essential being rich but soft blue, finely and uniformly speckled with white, lustrous glaze, and general accuracy of technique. For pieces satisfying these conditions they have always been ready to pay high prices, and the natural consequence is that choice specimens of *Kwang-yao* are more numerous in Japan than in China. It seems strange that this ware has not commanded larger appreciation in the West, for its beauty is unquestionable and its successful production has become completely a thing of the past.

The third principal variety of *Kwang-yao* has already been spoken of. Reference is made to it again merely for convenience of classification. It is distinguished by its peculiar viscous *clair-de-lune* glaze. The *pâte* resembles that of the *flambé Kwang-yao* described above, but is usually finer. This ware is often confounded with *Yuan-tsu* (*Yuan* dynasty ware), the two having very similar *pâtes* and general likeness of colour. Fine specimens of this kind of *Kwang-yao*, with their rich velvety glaze and soft bloom of bluish creamy white, passing into light and deep tints of lilac or azure, rank high among keramic productions. It is, however, probable that many of the best speci-

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VASE (HEIGHT, 14 INCHES) OF *KANG-HSI*, EGGSHELL *YANG-TSAI*, SOFT PASTE.

(See page 263.)

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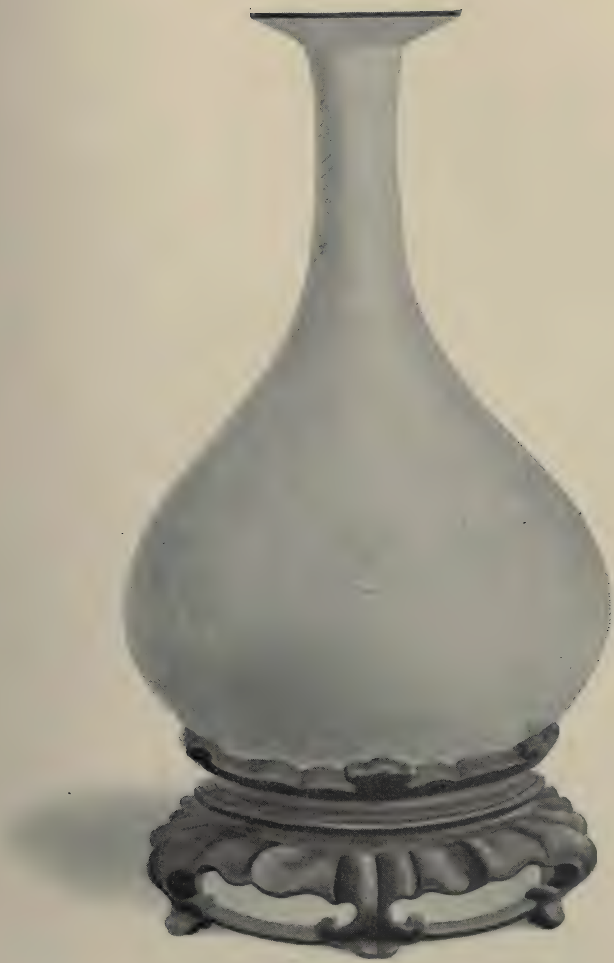

mens were not manufactured in Kwang-tung but at *Ching-tê-chên.*

The faiences spoken of above are the only notable wares of their class in China. But when the student comes to consider pottery, he is confronted by an important ware, the *Yi-hsing-yao*, known to Western collectors as boccaro. Yi-hsing lies near the Western shore of the Tai-wu Lake, a few miles from Shanghai, up the Yang-tsze-kiang. It is still celebrated for its terra cotta pottery, immense quantities of which are used by the Chinese for tea-pots. The modern productions, however, are coarse and clumsy as compared with those that commanded the admiration of tea-drinkers, especially in Japan, during the past three centuries. The *pâte* of the latter is as fine as pipe-clay and almost as hard as porcelain. Prized essentially for the colour and quality of the biscuit, it was not glazed, the keramist, depending for decorative effect upon quaint conceits of shape and delicately moulded ornaments incised or in relief. It would be nearly as difficult to detail all the colours of the Yi-hsing *pâte* as to catalogue the innumerable forms of tiny tea-pots to the manufacture of which the factories devoted their chief attention. In the Illustrated Catalogue of H'siang two specimens are depicted, but the painter, by an unskilful use of pigments, has suggested the false idea that the pieces are glazed. H'siang, as translated by Dr. Bushell, describes them thus: —

> Tea-pot of *Yi-hsing* pottery of the *Ming* dynasty. Of plain form with hexagonal section. The pottery of *Yi-hsing* dates from the Ching-tê era (1506–1521) of our own dynasty, during which a celebrated potter named Kung-chun, a native of the district, fashioned vessels of earthenware to

hold tea which were often changed in the furnace like this one. Its original colour is a light brown like felt, which changes to a bright green when the tea is put in, gradually reverting to its former colour, line by line, as the tea is poured out. This is only a curious accidental peculiarity, and yet modern virtuosi prize it most highly. This and the following tea-pot I saw at the capital in the collection of a prince, who had bought the two from Chang, a high officer of Nanking, for 500 taels. Height, 4½ inches.

Tea-pot of *Ming* dynasty *Yi-hsing* pottery, made by Kung-chun. Of vermilion red *pâte*, changing to bright green when tea is poured in, as described above. A wonderful transformation which I could not have believed had I not seen it with my own eyes. Height, 5 inches.

It is of course obvious that pottery covered with glaze could not change colour under the circumstances mentioned, and for the rest there is no doubt whatever that glaze was not employed in the manufacture of this ware. The price mentioned by H'siang — more than seven hundred dollars for two little pots, the one 4½, the other 5, inches high — attests the value placed on choice specimens of *Yi-hsing-yao* by Chinese connoisseurs at the close of the *Ming* dynasty. In Japan the fancy was still more marked. There the ware has always been known as *Shu-dei* (vermilion pottery) or *Haku-dei* (white pottery), and a tea-pot of it forms an essential feature in every *chajin's* equipage. Owing to this high appreciation on the part of the Japanese tea-clubs, there has been preserved in Japan an exceptionally accurate Chinese record of the origin and manufacture of the *Yi-hsing-yao*. The account owes nothing to Japanese research, being merely transcribed from Chinese annals; a fact which suggests that if the story of the *Yi-hsing-yao*, a ware certainly not standing at the head of Chinese keramic productions, has been investigated with so much care by an author of the Middle Kingdom, further research may yet be rewarded by the discovery of equally elaborate records in other branches of the Chinese potter's art. The document translated runs thus: —

The tradition with regard to the discovery of pottery clay is that, at a remote time, a strange-looking priest daily made his appearance in the village, and walked about the streets, calling out, "Treasure to sell! Treasure to sell!" The villagers crowded round and laughed at him. But he said: — "If you do not care to buy treasure, how can you hope to become rich?" Finally, an old villager accompanied the priest, and was conducted by the latter to a mountain where a hole had been partially dug. After this the priest disappeared, and the people, examining the hole, found that it shone brightly with all the five colours, so that its interior presented the appearance of brocade. The name of the mountain was *Tao-jung Shu-shan.* It was originally called *Tu-shan*, but *Tung-po Sien-shang*, observing its resemblance to the scenery of *Shu-chung*, gave it the name of *Shu-shan.* On the summit is a shrine where *Sien-shang* is worshipped. In a work, the *Yi-hsiang Hien-chi*, written by *Wangchw'an* of the *Ming* dynasty, the authority of an ancient writer is quoted to show that the mountain called *I-shan* joins eastward to the range of *Tung-ting* and is connected with *Shu-shang*

Light yellow clay comes from the mountain *Chao-chwang-shan.* It is used to mix with nearly all varieties of clay, being very tough, and an indispensable ingredient of good pottery. Another kind of yellow, called *Shi-hwang*, or stone yellow, is obtained from the same place. Under the influence of heat it assumes the colour of cinnabar. Azure-blue clay is found at *Li-shu:* it changes to dark brown in the furnace. In the same district the "pear-skin" clay is found: pottery made from it has the colour of a fresh pear (*Tung-li*). Pottery of the colour of pine spikelets is manufactured from light scarlet clay, and a variety of light yellow clay gives green ware. A clay called *Mi-keu* (literally, "closed mouth" or "secret opening") produces light red pottery, and a mixture of "pear-skin" clay with white sand gives pottery the colour of a light shade of Indian ink. The spirit of the mountain is said to create several other varieties of colour when its clays are baked. A clay found at the hill *Twan-shan* produces pottery with white spots like pearls; and the same clay mixed with azure-blue and stone-yellow clays give a rust colour of dark or light shade. White clay is obtained principally from a hill called *Pai-shi-shan* (white-stone hill), in Chiang-yin. An ancient writer says that in these hills there are caves capable of holding thirty or forty persons, and that from their roofs hang stalactites of various colours. In these caves clays of fine quality are found. The position of the caves changes, however, from time to time, according to the will of the spirit of the mountain. Doubtless if excavation sufficiently deep — two or three hundred feet — were made, good clay would be found everywhere.

The clay, having been carefully selected, is pounded, sifted, and then stored in covered holes to season. In mixing and preparing, the workmen employ various processes which are kept strictly secret. After the pots have been shaped, they too are seasoned for a long time, and ultimately five or six are placed in a carefully closed vessel within the kiln. Great pains and skill are necessary in stoving, excess or deficiency of temperature being alike fatal to the appearance of the finished piece. To make a really choice vase for holding water or tea demands an almost superhuman endowment of taste and dexterity. Not one potter among ten thousand is capable of the achievement. A pot for tea should be small, not large; shallow, not deep; its cover should be concave inside, not flat. Pots for storing tea, for washing tea, for holding hot water, and so forth, all have special characteristics with which the potter must be intimately acquainted.

From the time of *Kung-chun* down to that of *Shi Ta-pin* the *pâte* of good pottery was always distinguished by its fine texture. Some specimens had silvery spots; others had wrinkles, or faintly projecting dots. The longer one of these pots was used, the more attractive did its lustre become, and the more easily was its excellence recognised. Even as an ornament it possessed most pleasing properties. Sometimes the lustre of a pot is due to greasy particles which shine with increased plainness in the sunlight. Vulgar people preserve this unctuous brightness and rub the pot with their sleeves to intensify the effect. They forget that even the celebrated beauty *Si-tsu* would lose her charms were she covered with dirt. To put tea into such a vessel is like enshrining a god in a mud-heap.

A priest of the *Chin-sha* temple, who lived during the *Ming* dynasty, is said to have been the first to manufacture choice utensils of pottery for tea-drinking purposes, but his name has not been preserved. The temple of *Chin-sha* is situated about thirteen miles (English) to the south east of *Yi-hsing*. *Kung-chun*, however, who flourished in the *Chêng-tê* era (1506–1521) of the *Ming* dynasty, was the first really great expert. Servant to one *Wu I-shan*, an officer of educational affairs, he attended his master when the latter was receiving a course of instruction at the *Chin-sha* temple, and there succeeded in secretly learning the art of the old priest. His pots were hand-made, and in most of them thumb-marks are faintly visible. Generally their colour is that of a chestnut, and they have a subdued lustre like oxidised gold. Their simplicity and accuracy of shape are inimitable; worthy to be ascribed to divine revelations. The great artist being of the *Kung* family, many people employ that ideograph in writing his name, but the celebrated potter *Shi Ta-pin*, whose authority is indisputable, used other ideographs. From the time of *Kung-chun* downwards we have a series of renowned potters. Their names and specialties are as follow: —

Tung-Han, surnamed *Heu-chi*. He flourished during the *Wan-li* era (1573–1629), and is celebrated for his skill in modelling. A characteristic decoration on his pieces was the flower of the water caltrops. He appears to have been the first potter who ornamented the surface of the *Yi-hsing* ware with elaborate designs in relief.

Chao, whose artist name was *Liang*. He also flourished during the *Wan-li* era (1573–1620). His favourite style of decoration was that indicated by his name, *Liang ; i.e.*, millet, the stalks, ears, and leaves of which he moulded with great skill.

Yuan Chang, another great potter of the *Wan-li* era.

Shi Ming, a contemporary of the above and the father of *Shi Ta-pin*. He, together with *Tung*, *Chao*, and *Yuan*, are commonly known as the four celebrities of the *Wan-li* era. *Tung's* forte was beauty of decoration, and the other three were renowned for the excellence of their pottery.

Shi Ta-pin, surnamed *Shao-shan*, flourished during the closing years of the *Ming* dynasty (1620–1640). He was celebrated for his dexterity in combining coloured clays. He took *Kung-chun's* works as a model and ultimately developed remarkable skill. Among neither his predecessors nor his successors was there any one who could equal him, and he has always been regarded as a potter endowed with more than human ability. A verse of poetry associates his name with those of *Li Ta-chun-fang* and *Shi Ta-yin-chüen* as the three potters of greatest eminence at *Yi-hsing*.

Li Chun-fang was a pupil of *Shi Ta-pin*. He was a dexterous modeller, but the *pâte* of his early wares was not of the very highest quality, and it is said that on this account his master often found fault with him. One day he brought a vase which he had made, and which was of exceptionally fine quality, to *Ta-pin*, and said : — " Does this pot meet with your approval, honoured Signior ? " It is with reference to this incident that dilettanti acquired the habit of calling *Li's* best productions *Lao-hiung-hu*, or " pots of the honoured Signior." Ultimately *Li* became so skilful that *Ta-pin* was content to put his own name on pieces manufactured by his pupil. In point of fact, most of the specimens now attributed to *Ta-pin* were really made by *Li Chun-fang*. Connoisseurs, knowing this, are wont to refer to such ware as " *Li-ta* work, *Shi-ta-cachet*." [1]

Sü Yiu-chüen, surnamed *Shi-hang*, was not a potter by trade. His father, who was a great admirer of *Ta-pin's* wares, visited the latter's house one day, in company with the lad *Sü.* In the course of conversation, the father asked *Ta-pin* to mould an ox, but *Ta-pin* hesitated to comply, and laid aside the clay which had been offered to him. The lad *Sü*, taking this clay, went out of the house, and as chance willed, the first thing he saw was an ox in the act of rising from the place where he had been sleeping under a tree. One of the animal's legs was still bent, and *Sü*, watching it attentively, conceived the idea of reproducing its attitude in the clay which he carried. Returning to the potter's house, he showed the piece to *Ta-pin*, who said, with evident surprise: — "A man of your genius would soon surpass me in my own art." Thenceforth *Sü* applied himself to pottery. He struck out a style of his own, and varied the composition of his *pâtes* at will, so as to produce all sorts of charming colours. He made special study of the choice works of ancient keramists, took all sorts of objects for models, and manufactured many varieties of colour. But despite the celebrity which he attained, he used often to say with regret that his best work did not equal the inferior work of *Shi Ta-pin.* He had a son who also developed great skill as a potter, and to this day the names of *Ta-Sü* (the elder *Sü*) and *Siao-Sü* (the younger *Sü*) are preserved, though the exact name of the latter is not known. *Shi Ta-pin* had four other pupils, namely; *Ngeu Ching-chun*, who excelled in copying flowers and fruits, his execution being fine and delicate; *Shao Wan-kin*, who followed his teacher's methods exactly; *Shao Wan-yin*, and *Tsiang Poh-Kwa.* The last was a man of noble birth, and being averse to associate his family name with the occupation of potting, he used to write his signature with the ideograph *Kwa* instead of *fu*, which was his proper signature. His productions showed great force, as well as delicacy of execution.

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[1] The ideograph *ta*, which occurs so frequently in these names, is an honorary addition, signifying " great."

Chan Yun-hiang was contemporary with another potter, *Shi Ying*, but was younger and less skilled. He was a proud, lawless person, and ultimately falling into trouble with the authorities, was imprisoned. Hence the common people were wont to speak of him as "*Chan* the fool." His dexterity as a potter was, however, remarkable. His forte lay in the direction of minute work, and the accurate shapes of his hand-made pieces excited admiration. In inscribing his *cachet* he seems to have imitated the caligraphy of *Chun Ta-ch'wan*, but his writing is bad though his carving is delicate.

Chan Sin-hiang copied the works of his predecessors *Shi* and *Li*, and though he followed his models with great fidelity, evidences of an imitator's hand are discernible. His productions are remarkable for strength and boldness rather than for delicacy, but they all show talent of no common order. The success which he achieved proved his ruin, for he became over-bearing, drank deeply, and courted the society of men above his station. The consequence was that his later works lacked carefulness. Occasionally he selected pieces manufactured by his pupils and put his own *cachet* on them.

Min Lu-shang was renowned for his reproductions of celebrated masterpieces. He seems to have sacrificed originality to reverence.

Chan Kwang-fu confined himself to studying the works of *Kung-chun* and *Shi Ta-pin*. Unfortunately he lost the sight of one eye, and this calamity is more or less evidenced by a want of fineness in his productions.

Chan Chung, a native of *Wu-yuen*, and originally a manufacturer of porcelain at *Ching-tê-chên*. Finding it hopeless to look for distinction in a branch of the keramic art already numbering so many devotees, he abandoned porcelain and turned his attention to pottery. His ingenuity was remarkable. Many of the pieces he designed, as perfume-boxes, flower-vases, paper-weights, and so forth, show singularly fine moulding and chiselling. His vases were shaped in the form of flowers, leaves, and fruits and were decorated with insects. His dragons sporting among storm-clouds, with out-stretched claws and straining eyes; his statuettes of the goddess Kuan-yin, her features at once majestic and benevolent — these are indeed wonderful productions, instinct with life. His genius almost equalled that of *Lung Mien tao-tsz*, but unfortunately he overworked himself and died young.

Chan Chiun-yung, surnamed *Se-liang*, derived his inspiration from the works of *Chung-mei*, whom he almost matched in skill and elegance. In style his pieces resemble those of *Ngeu Ching-chun*. He used no measuring instrument when shaping his vessels, not caring for mathematical regularity. His skill in compounding various clays, his wonderfully ingenious shapes, and the hardness of his ware, resembling stone or metal, made him famous from the first. People christened him *Chan To-shu* of *Yi-hsing*. He died early.

All the above flourished during the latter years of the *Ming* dynasty; that is to say, from the *Wan-li* era (1573–1620) down to 1644. Other celebrities of the same age were *Shao-kai*, *Chen Heu-chi*, *Shao Erh-sun*, and *Chan Tsün-hiang*, the last a pupil of *Shi Ta-pin*.

During the two last periods of the *Ming* dynasty, *i.e.*, the *Tien-chi* era (1624–1627) and the *Ch'ung-chang* era (1628–1644), the following potters attained celebrity, viz.: — *Chen Li-shan*, *Chan Hö-chi*, *Chan Tiang-shang*, *Chang Yun-tsung*, and *Chan Chiün-shang*.

Some of the potters of *Yi-hsing* owed their reputation chiefly to their skill in carving inscriptions. Such a man was *Chan-chen*, whose style of writing has been much imitated by modern artists. Another was *Ta-sin*, who was employed by *Shi Ta-pin* to write inscriptions, and who was such a master of penmanship that his inscriptions have been carefully transcribed, and are used by connoisseurs as a standard of excellence. *Li Chung-fang*, who has been mentioned above as a renowned pupil of *Shi Ta-pin*, was not far inferior to this *Ta-sin* in caligraphic ability.

Hiang Pu-sun, another potter of about the same period, was a poet as well as a keramist. He was so proud of his talents that people called him insane, but he scarcely deserved such an epithet. He was incarcerated and died in prison.

During the *Ch'ung-chang* era (1628–1644), a potter called *Ch'an Tsz-ch'o* flourished. He was a man of great skill both as a modeller and as a caligraphist. In fact he deserves to be classed among the celebrities of the *Ming* dynasty.

A still more renowned potter of this dynasty was *Ch'an Ming-yuen*, surnamed *Hao-fang*, and called also *Hü-yin*. He flourished during the *Wan-li* era (1573–1620), and enjoyed a reputation of the highest character. A well-known writer says that his fame as a potter was widespread, and that wherever he went, nobles and *literati* invited him to their houses.

Four other potters, about whose period there is some uncertainty, are *Sü Ts'z-ching*, *Hwui Mang-ch'an*, *Chia Hüen*, and *Ching Ning-heu.* A noted connoisseur and author says that on a tea-pot in his possession the name of *Sü Ts'z-ching* is inscribed, and that the workmanship and caligraphy are almost worthy to rank with the productions of *Kung-chun* and *Shi Ta-pin.* He adds that in his youth he obtained a pot bearing the *cachet* of *Mang-ch'an*, but that the style of the caligraphy could not compare with that of *Shi Ta-pin.* Another writer of note, however, speaks with great enthusiasm of a pot by *Mang-ch'an* which he (the writer) obtained at the fair of Ts'i-fang Su-shan. There can be little doubt that *Mang-ch'an* was an expert of skill. *Chia Hüen's* specialty was the manufacture of seals. I have heard that among the treasures of a well known dilettante there is a vase by *Ching Ning-heu*, and that it ranks high as a keramic effort, but unfortunately I have not seen it.

The *Yi-hsing* potters build their ovens in tiers, like rabbit holes, on the face of the hill. The market price of the good clays has gradually risen, and now the places where these clays are found have been dug down even to the water-level. Formerly tea-pots by *Kung-chun* were fashionable, but subsequently those of *Shi Ta-pin* came into vogue. A tea-pot must be small, so that the bouquet and flavour of the tea will not disperse. Each guest should have a pot for himself. Among manufacturers of *Yi-hsing* pottery connoisseurs place *Kung-chun* first, *Shi Ta-pin* second, and *Chan Yung-hiang* third. The productions of these masters are valued like gold and precious gems. Nothing is more important in a tea-pot than a straight spout. The slightest curvature is fatal. A vessel for holding tea is different from a vessel for wine. Wine has no dregs, nor anything to obstruct its issue from the vessel. But with tea such is not the case. The leaves, soaked in water, become enlarged, and if one of them sticks in the spout, the flow is impeded. One drinks tea for pleasure, and one may justly feel irritated if the beverage declines to come out of the pot. A straight spout obviates such an annoyance. The true form of tea-pot began with *Kung-chun.* Nothing more refined and elegant than his tea-pots exists among tea utensils. *Shi Ta-pin's* productions are scarcely inferior, but those of *Chan Hu* and *Sü Hu* must be placed at a long interval. Some class even above *Ta-pin* the artist *Saio Yuen*, surnamed *Yang Sin*. But his works are so rare that it is difficult to judge its merits. Perhaps some of his masterpieces may be brooding over their misfortunes among the excreta of rats and barnyard fowls. It is with pots as with men!

The above treatise is marred by the fault of almost all Eastern works on art subjects: it is little more than a chronological record. What the reader learns from it is that nearly all the renowned potters of *Yi-hsing* flourished during the last century and a half of the *Ming* dynasty; that the chief points aimed at by them were elegance and unity of form, delicacy of modelling, quaint colouring of *pâte*, and caligraphic beauty in their inscriptions and marks. Probably no potters in any other part of the world ever attained such mathematical accuracy in shaping the various parts of their pieces. A lid moulded in the form of a sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum, for example, will be found to fit so accurately that not only does every one of its sixteen convexities correspond perfectly with any one of the sixteen concavities in the neck of the pot, but even the pot itself may be raised by the knob on the lid without the latter coming off. It is said that the *Yi-hsing* pottery furnished models for Böttcher's Saxon ware, and that it was also copied by the Elers at their factory in Staffordshire. The pottery of the Elers, however, was uniformly red. They never produced any of the curious tints found in Chinese *boccaro*. It is evident, however, that some of the beauties which the latter possessed in Chinese eyes can scarcely be appreciated by Westerners. This is notably the case with caligraphic skill. The delicately incised diapers occasionally found upon *Yi-hsing* specimens appeal to any one's taste, but it is impossible that foreigners should sympathise with the ecstasy of the Chinese dilettante when he discovers that the inscription on a pot is written in the style of the *Tang* dynasty, or that it resembles the penmanship of *Wan-yen.* It is said in China that skill in a certain style of engraving seal-characters cannot be acquired without unremitting practise for a period of from twenty to thirty years. Naturally the works of men who possessed this skill command, in the Chinese market, prices prohibitive to Western collectors who look only for beauties of form, delicacy and fidelity of modelling, and attractions of *pâte* and surface.

Not infrequently *Yi-hsing* clay was used to form the body of pieces covered with monochromatic or *flambé* glazes. These are easily confounded with the *Kwang-yao* described above.

In another variety the unglazed surface is brightened by enamelled decoration — scrolls, quatrefoils, floral designs, &c. in bas-relief, the colours employed being chiefly lilac, yellow, and green.

The *Yi-hsing* pottery is the protype of the celebrated *Banko-yaki* of Japan. Many pieces of the latter resemble the former so closely as to be quite capable of deceiving inexperienced amateurs. The Japanese product, however, is appreciably lighter and generally has coarser *pâte* than the Chinese. Of course the great majority of specimens of *Banko-yaki*, especially the modern manufacture, are essentially different from the *Yi-hsing-yao*, but certain examples of the former, made expressly to imitate the latter, are not easy to distinguish. The Kyôtô potters also took Chinese *boccaro* as a model for their *shudei*, and succeeded in manufacturing tea utensils that differ scarcely at all from their originals.

The *Yi-hsing-yao* is not important from the point of view of a Western collector. As will be gathered from what is written above, it was manufactured for use, not for ornament. Considered as examples of skilful manipulation of clays, curious natural colouring, and admirable delicacy of modelling, some specimens deserve a high place in the most select collection. But the pottery possesses few decorative qualities and belongs chiefly to the class of fictile curiosities.

Chapter XIII

CHINESE PORCELAIN IN THE WEST

IN considering when Oriental keramic productions first made their way to Europe, the student naturally led to inquire at what epoch the term "porcelain" began to be employed in its present sense. The term itself was originally applied to a species of shell that did duty for money in various countries. Its subsequent use to denote keramic manufactures was due to the resemblance between the latter and the smooth semi-translucency of the well known shell. But at what epoch was this resemblance observed and perpetuated by the dual use of the word? According to MM. Brongnard and de Laborde, as quoted by M. du Sartel, throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the name "porcelain" was applied in France exclusively to vases, table utensils, and ornaments into the manufacture of which mother-of-pearl entered. But from the beginning of the sixteenth century, it began to be used also for the purpose of designating glazed pottery imported from China, which showed the same pearly whiteness as the shell. If this account be accepted, it would follow that Chinese keramic wares did not come to Europe until the sixteenth century; that is to say, until the middle of the *Ming* dynasty. M. du Sartel, however, holds that from the thirteenth century — *i.e.* the close of the *Sung* Dynasty and beginning of the *Yuan* — Chinese ware reached the Mediterranean shores of Africa. In support of this opinion he quotes various facts. Thus, in an Arabian manuscript contained in the National Library, it is recorded that, in 1171, the Emir Saladin made a present of forty pieces of porcelain to Nurredin. Again, in 1298, the celebrated traveller Marco Polo, referring to the inhabitants of Carajan and other subjects of the Great Khan, notes that they used strings of white "porcelain" as money, and subsequently goes on to describe how, at the chief town of the Chinese province of Fokien, fine porcelain was manufactured, and thence exported to all parts. The conclusion obviously suggested by the former statement is that shells are referred to; by the latter, that so long ago as the days of Marco Polo, the term porcelain had become applicable in its modern sense. Further, an Arabian, Ibn Batoutah, writing under date 1310, says: — "Porcelain is not made in China except at Tsuan-chow and Canton. It is manufactured with clay found in the mountains of the locality. This clay is inflammable like charcoal. The potters add to it a stone found in the neighborhood, burn the compound for three days, then throw water on it, and the whole becomes powder, or a clay which they ferment. That which has been fermented during an entire month gives the best porcelain; that which has been fermented for only ten days gives porcelain of inferior quality. Porcelain in China sells for the same price as, or even a lower price than, pottery with us. It is exported to India and other countries, even as far as the Maghreb" —

i.e. the district comprising the whole north of Africa to the west of Egypt. All this supports the correctness of M. du Sartel's view with reference to the time when the term "porcelain" began to be applied to the keramic productions of China, and the time when the latter began to find its way to the shores of the Mediterranean. But the story of Ibn Batoutah illustrates another interesting point also. It is quite evident that his description of manufacturing processes can have reference only to glazing material. Even on this hypothesis, his account is inaccurate, though not more so, perhaps, than the account of any ordinary traveller would be. At all events, what is known of the methods pursued by Chinese potters in preparing their choice glazing material, shows plainly that these methods alone attracted the notice of the Arabian tourist — a fact strongly corroborating the conclusions arrived at independently in a former chapter, namely, that during the *Sung* and *Yuan* epochs the preparation of glazes occupied the attention of the Chinese potter almost exclusively, the manufacture of a fine, translucid *pâte* not having been yet included among his *tours de force*.

If Chinese so-called "porcelain" was exported to India, the north of Africa, and elsewhere, in 1310, it seems more than probable that specimens would have been brought to Europe also by the Venetians, who, from the close of the thirteenth century, carried on a brisk commerce with Asia and Africa. M. du Sartel, with the object of throwing light on this question, has extracted a great deal of interesting information from catalogues of ancient collections in Europe. In an inventory of the possessions of Clarisse de Médicis, he finds it stated that her husband, Lorenzo de Médicis, received certain porcelain vases from the ruler of Persia in 1487. The maritime laws of Barcelona, dating from the same epoch, also show that porcelain was among the objects imported from Egypt. At a still earlier date, 1440, Jean de Village, a commercial agent of Jacques Cœur, was employed by the Sultan of Babylon to carry three bowls and a plate of Chinese porcelain to Charles VII. Great interest is said to have been excited in France by these objects, and it can scarcely be doubted that little time was suffered to elapse before a fresh supply of similar pieces was procured. On the other hand, the difficulty or trafficking in such a fragile material has to be remembered: the Cape of Good Hope route had not yet been discovered, and Oriental porcelain coming to Europe must have been transported on the backs of camels across the desert. The information that one might expect to derive from catalogues of early collections is greatly obscured by the double signification attaching to the term "porcelain." When, indeed, mention is made of vases, plates, dishes, and goblets of "porcelain" with handles, covers, and so forth of silver or gilt bronze, it is scarcely possible to imagine that the material of which these pieces were manufactured could have had anything to do with shell. Nevertheless, there are obstacles to full belief in M. du Sartel's conclusion that "porcelain," or keramic productions of the Orient, constituted an important item in the collections of European virtuosi from the middle of the fourteenth century. The decorative designs on several of the specimens described in the catalogues quoted by M. du Sartel are essentially European. Some of these designs are on the metal mountings of the specimens, but some appear to be on the ware itself. Among the latter are figures of the Virgin Mary, of St. Paul, of St. John, of the Twelve Apostles, and so forth. These occur on specimens in the collections of the Duke of Normandy (1363), of Charles V. (1380), and of the Duke of Berry (1416). Now it is known that from the sixth century Nestorian missionaries carried on the work of propagandism in China; that from the beginning of the fourteenth century the field which they had hitherto monopolised was shared by the Minorites; and that both fell with the fall of the *Yuan* dynasty of Mongols (1368), not to be replaced until the rise of the Portuguese settlement at Macao, in 1517. It might, therefore, be supposed that porcelain such as that described in the three collections mentioned above, owed its decorative designs to the inspiration of Roman Catholic priests residing in China. But it is almost certain that the Chinese potters of the *Yuan* era had not carried the art of painting in blue *sous couverte* to a point such as would be indicated by the representation of saintly personages. The student is therefore constrained to think that the examples adduced by M. du Sartel were of mother-of-pearl, not of keramic ware. The reader can judge for himself: —

INVENTAIRE DU DUC DE NORMANDIE (1363).

Un tableau de pourcellaine quarré, de plusieurs pièces, et au milieu l'ymage de Nostre-Dame, garny d'argent, doré à ouvrage d'oultremer.

INVENTAIRE DE CHARLES V (1380).

Un tableau quarré de pourcelaine où d'un côté est l'ymage de Nostre-Dame en un esmail d'azur et plusieurs autres ymages à l'environ et de l'autre côté a une ymage de Saint Pol et est environné de perles tout autour et y faillent quatre pierres.

Un tableau de pourcelaine quarré où d'un côté est l'ymage Nostre-Dame et xij apostres en tour et de l'autre côté a plusieurs ymages et à l'environ xij grosses perples, y esmeraudes et y rubis d'Alexandre.

Uns petits tableaux quarrés de pourcelaine, enchassiez eu or, où est au dos un demi ymage de Nostre-Dame.

Uns petits tableaux quarrés de pourcelaine, où est entaillié un crucifiement, Nostre-Dame et Saint Jean, sans nulle garnison.

Inventaire du Duc de Berry (1416).

Un grand tableau de bois où il y a au milieu un ymage de Nostre-Dame de pourcelaine et plusieurs autres ymages de pourcelaine autour de la vie Nostre Seigneur et de Nostre-Dame, garny d'un des côtés à l'entour d'argent, doré, à l'euvre de Damas.

Not one of these descriptions seems applicable to a keramic specimen, whereas every one of them may easily be associated with the idea of work in mother-of-pearl. If, however, M. du Sartel's conclusions appear to have been carried too far in one direction, they can scarcely be traversed in respect of the fact that glazed pottery or stone-ware was certainly represented in these early collections. Thus in the Duke of Anjou's inventory (1360–1368) is found "*une escuelle d'une pierre appelée pourcellaine*," and in that of Queen Jeanne d'Evreux (1372), "*un pot à eau de pierre de pourcelaine.*" Bowls and pots of "a stone called porcelain" can only be interpreted in one sense. It may therefore be confidently concluded that as early as the *Yuan* dynasty (1260–1367) Chinese keramic ware found its way to Europe and was highly prized there. But inasmuch as, in the case of every specimen reasonably identifiable as keramic, there is no talk of any decoration other than that applied to the metal mountings, it may also be concluded — and the conclusion is in strict accord with the researches set forth in previous chapters — that the art of decorating keramic pieces, with colours, either under or over the glaze, was still in its infancy at the middle of the fourteenth century.

It is not till the beginning of the sixteenth century that there is found in Europe a specimen of Chinese ware, as the nature of which nothing is left to conjecture. In 1505, Philip of Austria, being driven by stress of weather to Weymouth, became the guest of the sheriff, Sir Thomas Trenchard, and in return for this hospitality presented to Sir Thomas some bowls of porcelain. These bowls are still preserved by the Trenchard family. They are white porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze. The manufacture of blue-and-white ware in China had reached a point of high excellence fully eighty years before this date, so that King Philip's keramic specimens are precisely what they might have been expected to be. To about the same time, or a little later, belongs the *céladon* bowl of Archbishop Warham, previously alluded to, and in 1508 it is recorded that the Portuguese, having brought a number of keramic specimens from China and sold them at a handsome profit, renewed their voyage, reaching Canton in 1517. Thenceforth the supply of Chinese porcelain was doubtless more abundant, though the ware continued to be highly esteemed and to command large prices.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the

English East India Company was formed. By the agency of this association the trade in Chinese porcelain may be said to have been inaugurated. Any specimens that had previously come westward are attributable to special and infrequent opportunities. The chief station of the East India Company was at Cambron in the Persian Gulf. Thither were brought keramic productions of Persia and China, and thence they were exported together to Europe. So little was then known about the resources of the Middle Kingdom and the great industry at Ching-tê-chên that the Chinese wares sent westward in the Company's ships were generally described as "Cambron ware." It was not until 1840 that an English factory, established at Canton, began to send porcelain direct to Europe, calling it "China ware." Exportation by the Portuguese from Macao is said to have gone on about the same period. Another source of supply was the Dutch Compagnie des Indes. From Deshima, at Nagasaki, in Japan, considerable quantities of Japanese porcelain were exported by the agents of this company, between 1698 and 1722. At the same time Chinese porcelain came to Deshima in Chinese junks, and was despatched westward together with the Japanese product. This source of Chinese supply must have been small and fitful, but to the mixture of the two porcelains and their simultaneous despatch to Europe may probably be attributed the origin of the remarkable confusion that has always existed among Western amateurs in respect of the keramic wares of China and Japan — confusion which reaches its acme in the writings of M. Jacquemart. The agents of the Compagnie des Indes seem to have been the first to conceive the idea of procuring pieces of Chinese ware specially manufactured to suit European taste. They had found this device successful in the case of Japanese Imari porcelain, and they gave orders to the Chinese potters — whose industry was then at the zenith of the revival inaugurated in the reign of *Kang-hsi* (1662–1722) — for specimens decorated with the arms of France and noble families. Shapes and models were also furnished, and it is probable that many valued examples preserved in European collections are of this hybrid nature. Chinese writers also state that much of the porcelain sold to foreign merchants was expressly made with a view to its market, and was accordingly called *Yang-ki, i.e.* ware of the outer seas, or ware for exportation. Western traders, of course, concerned themselves only to procure marketable pieces in ample quantity. Nothing is more unlikely than that they made any attempt to search for choice old specimens, which, as is known from Chinese writers, commanded a deterrent price in the Middle Kingdom itself, and would certainly not have been appreciated in Europe. At the time of the export of the Cambron ware the factories at Ching-tê-chên were in a state of temporary decadence. Their productions were comparatively coarse, depending rather upon profusion of decoration and bright colours than upon technical excellence. There can be little question that the majority of the so-called Cambron ware was comparatively inferior heavy porcelain decorated with blue under the glaze and with red, gold, and green enamels over it. One may indeed go so far as to say that practically all the Chinese porcelain brought to Europe up to the third quarter of the seventeenth century was blue-and-white, or of the coarse enamelled description manufactured so profusely in the *Wan-li* era. After 1670, the outcome of the great Kang-hsi workshops began to come into the market, and enamelled ware of fine quality would then have been included in the exports. The history of the keramic industry in China is alone sufficient to establish these facts, but strong corroborative testimony is furnished by Western writers. Thus Gersaint, cataloguing the collection of the Viscount de Fonspertuis, in 1747, says: — "The most usual kind of porcelain has a white ground with blue flowers, landscapes, and figures or animals. Of late years, however, there has appeared a new kind, which is called 'enamelled porcelain.' Its colours are bright, but they lack harmony." The same writer gives the following interesting account of the porcelains which, at that time, constituted the staple of European collections:— "Porcelain is made of all colours in China. Yellow destined for Imperial use; grey that approaches the tint of *céladon*. The latter is seldom seen. It is generally covered with a number of irregular little lines crossing each other as though the vase had been broken all over. Large lines are also met with, the effect of which is more marked. Porcelains of this kind are called '*truitées*' or '*craquelées*' according to the smallness or largeness of the lines. Blue, red, and green porcelains are also to be procured, but it is difficult to obtain a uniform surface with these colours. They rarely succeed; and perfect specimens are consequently very costly. I have seen black porcelain also; it is very rare, and, for the rest, is only valuable on account of its scarcity, being too sombre to be decorative. There is also white porcelain painted with blue under the glaze, which is the commonest variety, and there is the new sort with coloured enamels which has only been seen within the past few years." That M. Gersaint's estimate of the costliness of choice specimens was not exaggerated may be ascertained by examining the accounts of sales made at that time. Thus, when (1767) the collection of M. Julienne was brought to the hammer, two large Dogs of Fo, in turquoise ware splashed with violet, sold for 4,800 *livres*, and a *céladon* bottle with flames and dragons in relief, for 1,996 *livres*, whereas Raphaël Sanzio's painting of the "Holy Family" fetched only 399 *livres*, and Guido Reni's "Infant Jesus," 1,100.

It is the fashion with Western amateurs to attribute a large proportion of the older specimens in their collections to the *Ming* Dynasty (1368–1661). From what has been here recorded the reader will readily see that no such estimate of age is justifiable. Fine pieces manufactured during the celebrated epochs of the *Ming* Emperors commanded enormous prices in China — prices quite out of proportion to their decorative merits from a Western point of view. The inferior but more brilliant productions of the *Lung-ching* and *Wan-li* reigns (1567–1619) did probably form a small part of the porcelain exported from Canton and Macao, but even this supposition admits of reasonable dispute. With exceptions so rare as to be almost unworthy of notice, it may be concluded that the oldest specimens in Western collections of the last century dated from the *Kang-hsi* era (1662–1722). M. du Sartel, the latest writer on Chinese keramics, appears to have shared the delusion of many brother connoisseurs in this respect, despite the generally painstaking and appreciative character of his criticisms. He arrives, however, at an indisputable conclusion when he writes:—"It must not be believed that at the end of the last century, the great European collections offered the brilliant aspect to-day presented by the cabinets of a modern collector. A new current has recently set in from these countries to ours. It has unveiled enamels that we previously ignored, enriched us with pure specimens of the true antique art, and revealed to us new forms of the ornamental genius that our fathers loved without knowing, as we know, its full extent." It is indeed of late years that the keramic riches of China have been exploited for the benefit and delight of the West. The supply is not yet exhausted, but it grows daily scarcer, owing partly to the actual paucity of choice specimens, and partly to the competition of Chinese virtuosi, who have re-developed something of their old-time mania, and will now give for certain varieties prices prohibitive to any but very wealthy collectors. Meanwhile, even Europe is parting with its treasures to enrich the cabinets of collectors in the United States, for there, above all other places, the porcelains of China are appreciated, and thither the choicest examples steadily gravitate.

It might have been predicted that the proverbial ingenuity of the Chinese would not fail them when the monetary expediency of reproducing celebrated porcelains of bygone eras became really urgent. Until some seven or eight years ago, there flowed into the market a sufficient supply of genuine old specimens to satisfy the collectors of that time and to furnish the stores of dealers in bric-à-brac. But America's requirements proved yearly more pressing, and as the means of meeting them grew necessarily less extensive, prices rose to such a height that the temptation to supplement with modern imitations the fitful and constantly dwindling supply of early *chefs-d'œuvre*, could not be resisted. No one expected, indeed, that it would be resisted, but every one was tolerably confident that collectors possessing ordinary knowledge would be guaranteed against deception owing to the incapacity of the Chinese of the present era to produce anything really comparable with justly famous examples dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But no such confidence can be felt any longer. The imitators show a degree of skill that brings their work within measurable distance of the fine old standards. Even the hypothetically incomparable blue-and-white porcelains of the *Kang-hsi* kilns now have modern rivals so good that many an amateur has been deceived by them, and many more are destined to be deceived. The great difficulty used to lie in the quality and tone of the blue. Using the smalt of these cheap times, the potter could not produce anything better than a weak, insipid, and bodiless colour. But things have changed in that respect. Whether a different cobalt is employed, or whether some improved process has been elaborated, a fine strong blue is now obtained, showing much of the brilliancy and depth that distinguish genuine specimens of the great eras. No one deserves to be much blamed that mistakes these modern imitations for their originals, so far as the blue is concerned. But a well educated eye easily detects in the new colour elements of garishness and hardness, the absence of which constitutes one of the chief charms of the old. As to technique, too, there are always points of manifest inferiority in modern porcelains of this class. The glaze lacks lustre, being vitreous rather than velvety, and the surface is disfigured by blistering or pitting more or less prominent. Of course the connoisseur turns at once to the *pâte*, but for that the crafty Chinaman makes full preparation by grinding and polishing the lower rim of the specimen until the exposed *pâte* acquires artificially much of the natural smoothness and closeness of grain that constitute distinctive marks of good old ware. In this process, however, he betrays himself, for even though the colouring matter that he employs to impart a spurious appearance of age to the freshly ground rim be not apparent to uninstructed eyes, the marks of the grinding may always be found by close examination in the glaze on the bottom or even on the body near the rim. The amateur may therefore fortify his faltering convictions by looking carefully for such marks, and though his sight be keen, he will do well to use a magnifying glass. Already many brand new blue-and-white "Hawthorns" have passed into the possession of foreign residents in China, and many others have doubtless crossed the water to America. Every one of these imitations is a factor of false education, tending to create a vitiated standard of quality and a deceptive scale of value. Besides, it is in the nature of such things that their owners remain victims of delusion. Friends are not frank enough, even supposing them sufficiently skilled, to ungild a man's treasures to his face, and collectors are so infatuated that they gladly accept as genuine praise the perfunctory approval of conventionalism. Thus the Chinese find their account in carrying on the fraud, and one may expect to see "blue-and-white," after its kind, become daily a commoner article of furniture. Even the genuine connoisseur is startled by these new specimens. Too essentially selfish — every enthusiastic collector is incapable of altruism — to be glad that the general public is gaining access to a species, however spurious, of the porcelains he loves, he trembles before the terrible contingency that all the ancient skill may be recovered one of these days, and that his much valued gems may be vulgarised by a crowd of cheap and universally accessible rivals. Probably the fear is chimerical, yet to say so with absolute confidence is difficult, seeing that even the celebrated "soft-paste" porcelain also is represented in modern imitations. It is a singular fact that until quite recently this beautiful variety of ware was almost completely neglected by foreign collectors. Of late years, however, there has been an awakening, especially on the part of American connoisseurs, and the resulting demand has not only drawn a number of fine specimens from Chinese private collections, but has also induced modern potters to apply all their care and skill to the work of reproduction. They have not succeeded quite so well as in the case of the ordinary hard-paste, for in the modern *Kai-pien-yao* it will be found almost invariably that the crackle has an accidental appearance, that the *pâte* is rough, that the decoration is weak and scratchy, and that the glaze is discoloured rather than mellow. Still the imitations are quite good enough to deceive ordinary eyes, and it is certain that a number of new specimens have gone to America, doubtless to find ready purchasers. As for other varieties of porcelain, the process of reproduction is equally active. The so-called "apple green" *craquelé* ware is turned out in quite considerable quantities. Here, too, the amateur ought to find sufficient guidance in the comparatively coarse, though carefully ground and polished, *pâte* of the modern porcelain, in the weak tone of the colour, and above all in the absence of the "mossy" edge peculiar to the crackle of the genuine ware. Corresponding attempts to simulate are seen in the so-called "black hawthorns" of the time. The fine close-grained *pâte* of the old kilns is not producible, and the black glaze forming the ground colour is so vitreous and garish that it has to be subjected to an all-over process of grinding, the marks of which can be detected without much trouble. "Mustard crackle" offers another favourite field for imitation, but here the amateur should never fall a victim if he remembers, first, that the slightest muddiness of colour is fatal, and secondly, that a fine velvety lustre invariably appears on the glaze of *Chien-lung* and earlier specimens. As to the fine reds, *sang-de-bœuf*, "peach-blow," "bean-blossom" &c. their reproduction is still more difficult, though it must be confessed that some recently manufactured specimens of *Lang-yao* are declared deceptive by Chinese connoisseurs themselves. Further, it must be observed that Japan also is in the field as an imitator, and that specimens of ambitious "liquid-drawn" glazes by Makuzu, and of *céladons*, "*famille verte*" and other varieties by Seifu have been acquired by Chinese dealers and are confidently offered for sale as Chinese porcelains. The Japanese potters are not necessarily parties to this fraud, nor does it follow that the Chinese themselves attempt any witting deception, for in shops in Shanghai and even Tien-tsin specimens frankly stamped with the ideographic names or marks of their Japanese makers are confidently paraded as genuine Chinese porcelains. Such pieces must plainly have an honest origin, nor is it easily conceivable that if the Chinese identified the marks, they would have courage to attempt so patent a deception. But these considerations do not smooth the path for unfortunate amateurs. They are bound to be victimised more than ever. Perhaps this warning may save them some disappointment.

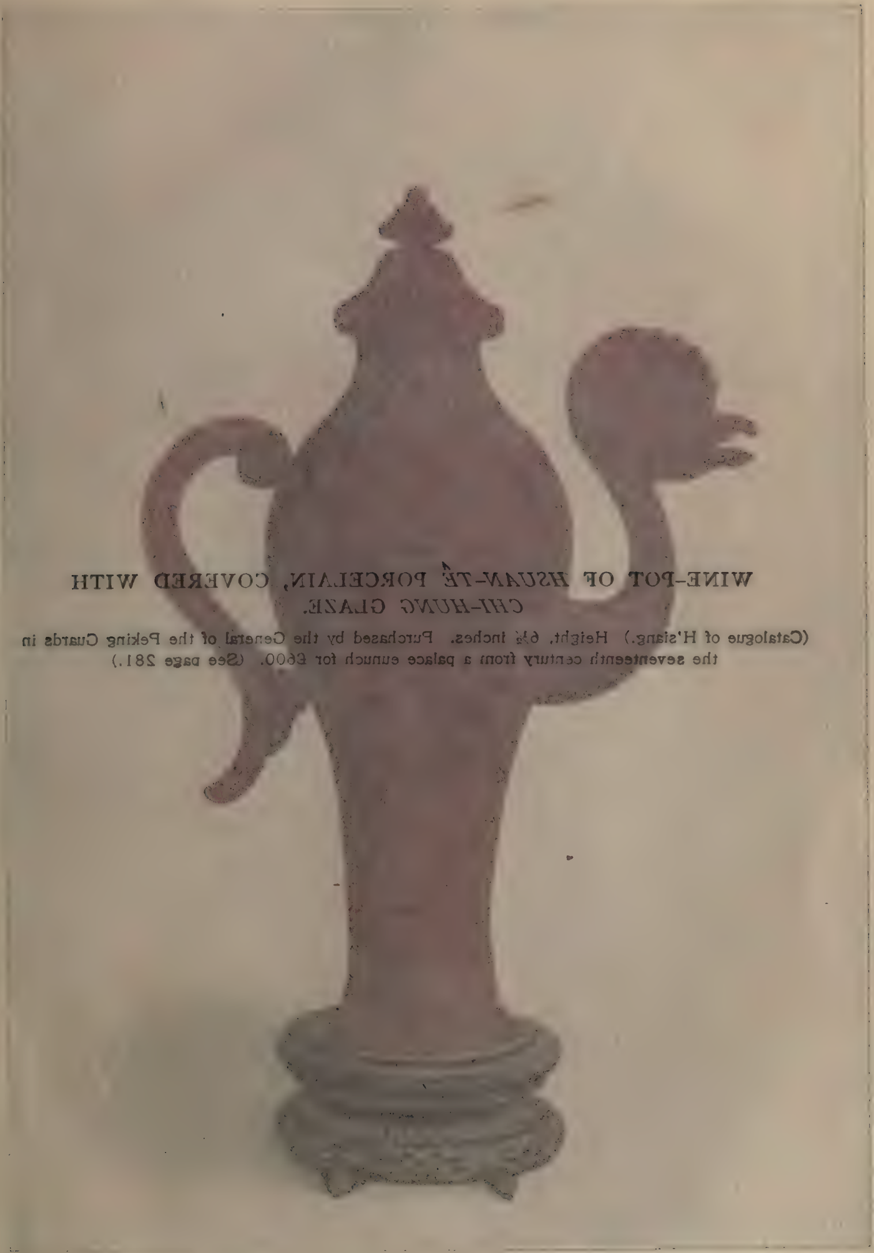
Chapter XIV

MANUFACTURING PROCESSES

THE questions of the preparation of *pâte* and glazing material by Chinese potters, of the application of the glaze and of the mode of selecting and employing colouring matter, though investigated from time to time by Europeans residing in China, are still more or less obscure. It would be useless, therefore, to attempt to enter into the minutiæ of these matters. Brief reference may be made, however, to processes of which a general knowledge has been acquired; namely, those followed at the Ching-tê-chên factories in the times of their great prosperity; that is to say, during the reigns of *Kang-hsi*, *Yung-ching*, and *Chieng-lung*, the period comprised between 1661 and 1795. Whether these processes differed from those in vogue during the Ming dynasty, and if so, in what the difference consisted, there are unfortunately no means of determining. But it may reasonably be assumed that the differences were not considerable, for certainly in many directions the achievements of the *Ming* potters were at least equal to those of their successors in the *Tsing* dynasty. Information with respect to these questions of manufacture is chiefly derivable from the Annals of Fu-liang, as translated by M. Julien, from the letters of Père d'Entrecolles, from the annotations of M. Salvétat, and from minor sources.

The material employed in the manufacture of Chinese porcelain is composed of two ingredients, *petuntse* and *kaolin*. Of these the former is fusible and gives to the ware that transparency which characterises true porcelain; the other is infusible, and its presence enables the mass to support the temperature necessary to transform the fusible element into glass. Both are found in the mountains of a district distant about sixty miles from Ching-tê-chên, whither they are brought by boat, having first undergone preliminary manipulation and been reduced to the form of bricks. M. Salvétat's analysis shows that these materials practically correspond in all their constituents with those drawn from the mines at Saint-Yrieix and used at the Sèvres factories. At Ching-tê-chên the bricks undergo further treatment, which need not be described here, since it presents no novel or noteworthy features. The *kaolin* and the *petuntse* are then mixed — in equal portions for the finest porcelain; in the ratio of four parts of *kaolin* to six of *petuntse* for middle-class ware; and in the ratio of one part of *kaolin* to three of *petuntse* for inferior ware. M. Salvétat has analysed the masses of four qualities of Chinese porcelain. His results, side by side with corresponding figures for the Sèvres *pâte*, are as follows: —

	CHINESE PORCELAINS.				SÈVRES PORCELAIN.
	FIRST QUALITY.	SECOND QUALITY.	THIRD QUALITY.	FOURTH QUALITY.	
Silica	69.0	70.0	73·3	69.0	58.0
Alumina . . .	23.6	22.2	19·3	21.3	34·5
Iron Oxide . .	1.2	1.3	2.0	3·4	34·5
Lime	0.3	0.8	0.6	1.1	4·5
Magnesia . . .	0.2	trace	0.6	1.1	4·5
Manganese Oxide,	0.1	trace	0.6	1.1	4·5
Potash	3·3	3·6	2·5	3·4	3·0
Soda	2.9	2.7	2.3	1.8	3·0



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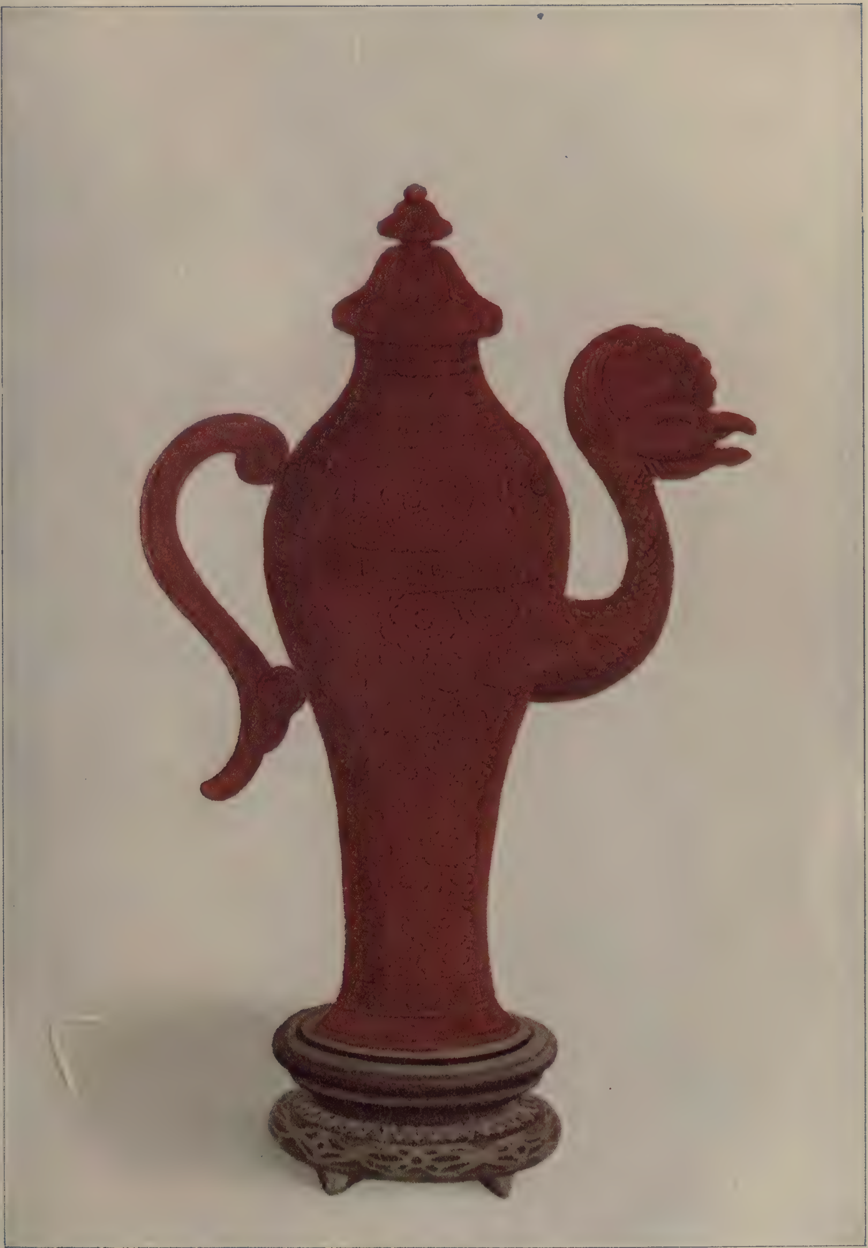
WINE-POT OF *HSUAN-TE* PORCELAIN, COVERED WITH *CHI-HUNG* GLAZE.

(Catalogue of H'siang.) Height, 6½ inches. Purchased by the General of the Peking Guards in the seventeenth century from a palace eunuch for £600. (See page 281.)

	Chinese Porcelains.				Sèvres Porcelain.
	First Quality.	Second Quality.	Third Quality.	Fourth Quality.	
Silica	69.0	70.0	73.3	69.0	58.0
Alumina . . .	23.6	22.2	19.3	21.3	34.5
Iron Oxide . .	1.2	1.3	2.0	3.4	34.5
Lime	0.3	0.8	0.6	1.1	4.5
Magnesia . . .	0.2	trace	0.6	1.1	4.5
Manganese Oxide,	0.1	trace	0.6	1.1	4.5
Potash	3.3	3.6	2.5	3.4	3.0
Soda	2.9	2.7	2.3	1.8	3.0



It is well known that the nature of porcelain biscuit depends largely on the amount of iron oxide it contains, the impure colour of bad ware being chiefly due to the presence of that mineral. It was to *kaolin* in its mass that the porcelain of China owed its beauty — its whiteness, its transparency, and its timbre. Europe knew nothing of *kaolin* until the eighteenth century. Western keramists could produce only the well known *pâte tendre*, fusible at a temperature of 700° less than that supported by the *pâte dure* of China.

Full acquaintance with the composition of Chinese porcelain *pâte* and ability to reproduce its qualities long ago put an end to the interest excited by its first appearance among European experts. But the same cannot be said of Chinese glazes. Among these there are some that still defy imitation and remain more or less a mystery. In fact, much of the beauty of old Chinese wares is due to the texture and tone of their glaze; its peculiar lustre, solidity, and velvety softness constituting features as attractive as they are incomparable. The notes of M. d'Entrecolles, with reference to the subject of glaze and its preparation, are worth translating in full. "In addition," he writes, "to boats laden with *petuntse* and *kaolin* which line the banks at Ching-tê-chên, one sees others filled with a white liquid substance. I had long known that this was the glazing matter which gave the porcelain its whiteness and lustre, but I was ignorant of its composition which I have now at length learned. This glazing material is obtained from the hardest rock. Although the rock from which *petuntse* is obtained is also employed in making the glazing matter, only the parts that are whitest and show the most distinctly green marks are chosen. These green marks, or spots, are caused by the presence of oxide of manganese. The stone has to be well washed, in the first place, after which it is subjected to processes similar to those employed with the ordinary *petuntse*. When, by these processes, the purest portions have been separated, there is added to every hundred parts by weight of the liquid one part of fibrous gypsum, which has been previously brought to a red heat." M. Salvétat considers that the rôle played by this gypsum is purely mechanical. It facilitates the precipitation of minute impurities held in suspension in the liquid. "The glazing matter, thus prepared, is never used alone. There is added to it another substance which may be called its soul, and which is prepared as follows: — A mass of lime is taken and sprinkled with water to reduce it to powder. A bed of fern is then made and on this is placed a bed of the slacked lime. Over this is placed another bed of fern and then another of lime and so on. The whole mass is subsequently roasted, and when it is entirely calcined, the ashes are spread upon another bed of fern, and the process of piling and burning is gone though *de novo*. This is repeated six or seven times, and even oftener for very choice glazes. According to the history of Fu-liang, the wood of the *Diospyrus Kaki* was formerly used instead of ferns, but this practice has been abandoned owing to the scarcity of the tree. Perhaps the change of process is responsible for the deterioration in the quality of modern porcelain." M. d'Entrecolles, it must be remembered, wrote these notes in 1720–25; that is to say, during the closing years of the reign of *Kang-hsi*, an epoch generally regarded as particularly prolific in fine wares. His reference to the deterioration of porcelain must be taken in the sense that many of the grand monochromes of the *Ming* dynasty were, in his day, esteemed above anything subsequently produced, though with such an estimate connoisseurs of the present age are not likely to agree. "The quality of the lime and the nature of the ferns," he continues, "contribute appreciably to the excellence of the glazing matter, and I have remarked that the lime and ferns of certain localities are much more highly esteemed than those of others. The workmen, having obtained a sufficiency of these ashes of lime and ferns, throw them into an urn filled with water. Then to every hundred parts by weight there is added one part of fibrous gypsum. The mixture is well shaken and left to settle, until there floats on the surface a scum which is removed and placed in a second urn. This purifying process is repeated several times, until a species of paste is formed at the bottom of the second urn. The water is then carefully drained off and the residue is the matter which is mixed with the glazing liquid obtained from *petuntse* as described above. It is essential that the mixture should be of uniform consistency, and to determine this, pieces of *petuntse* are plunged into it. By examining the surface of these when they are withdrawn, it is possible to estimate the intimacy in which the components of the glaze are mingled. With regard to the quantities in which the lime and fern compound is added to the *petuntse* liquid, ten parts by weight of the latter go to one part of the former."

This account shows plainly that the quality of the glazing material depended largely on the expertness and care of those that prepared it. The industry appears to have been a specialty at one time, and it is recorded that frauds were often practised by the manufacturers, who increased the bulk of the liquid by adding water and fibrous gypsum, the result of course being an evolution of sulphuric acid in the furnace and consequent imperfections in the surface of the porcelain. An idea of the pains lavished on the manufacture may be gathered from the "History of Ching-tê-chên Keramics," where it is stated that the potters of the *Hung-woo* era (1368–1398) used to dry the unbaked vases during a year, at the end of which time they were replaced on the wheel, thinned down and covered with the glazing material. Then, after having been again thoroughly dried, they were put in the oven. When they emerged, if any faults were found in the glaze, it was removed on the wheel by means of a tool, and the piece, having been re-glazed, was again fired. "By these means," writes the author of the history, "a glaze lustrous and rich as congealed fat was obtained." It is, indeed, the perfection of their glazes which places the porcelains of China at the head of all the keramic wares in the world.

To what particular methods of manufacture is this excellence of glaze due? The question has naturally received attention in Europe, especially at the hands of the well-known chemist, M. Salvétat, of the Imperial Factory at Sèvres. "The glaze," he writes, "of European porcelain is generally composed — the fact is certain in the case of Sèvres ware — of pure pegmatite, finely ground and attached by immersion to the ware while in the condition of 'biscuit.' In Germany certain substances are mixed with the felspar to modify its fusibility: often *kaolin* is added to produce greater resistance to the action of heat. But at

Sèvres, for a long time back, the pegmatite of Saint Yrieix is employed alone. If, in the factory's early days, an artificial glaze was used, it was because the potters were ignorant of the advantages to be derived by employing the volcanic rocks of Haute-Vienne. About the year 1780, the glaze was composed of a mixture of twenty parts of sand from Fontainebleau, twenty-four parts of porcelain stone, and six parts of chalk. This composition, tolerably difficult to melt, had disadvantages that led to its abandonment. At any rate, it is with the processes now actually in use that I compare those of China, and I believe myself perfectly secure in the conclusions I record here. If the addition of lime or of other matters to modify the fusibility of the vitreous substances employed in glazing porcelain, is exceptional in Europe, in China, on the contrary, the use of pure petrosilex without any admixture is confined to special cases. The porcelains of China and Japan are generally covered with composite glazes, obtained by mixing various materials in proportions determined by the nature of the ware. The substance which the Chinese add to petrosilex to render the latter more fusible, is lime. This is clearly shown both by the translation of Chinese books, and by analyses which have been made either of glazes taken from finished porcelains, or of specimens sent by Père Ly, marked 'lime' by him, and specified as part or the glazing material. I must repeat that it is the lime alone which seems, in my opinion, to play an active rôle in the calcined mixture of fern-leaves and lime, having regard to the small quantity of fern ashes that enter the mixture. For the rest, these ashes contain only silica and insignificant quantities of phosphoric acid. I do not think that any influence should be ascribed to the soluble salts obtained from them; moreover certain passages that treat of glazing material seem to show that it is sometimes composed by mixing chalky earth to the felspathic quartz which forms the basis of the glazing matter. It is also explained that the mixture of caustic lime and ashes is finely ground and washed before being mixed with the petrosilex, the carbonised film which the carbonic acid of the atmosphere forms on the surface of the liquid being carefully removed to be mixed with the petrosilex. This practice has no other object than the production of a perfectly pure lime. We are apparently given to understand that it is the film of regenerated lime which constitutes the useful element, and that the fern ashes which sink to the bottom of the vessel in which the washing is effected, are thrown away as of no value. Whatever be the true action of the fern ashes, whatever be the real consequence of calcining the lime and the ferns, judging only by the rough figures which analyses give, it is evident that the presence of the lime, which enters in very minute quantities only into the glaze of European porcelain, but which, on the contrary, is found in considerable proportions in the glaze of Chinese porcelain — sometimes as much as twenty-five per cent by weight — establishes a very salient difference between the two productions."

The conclusion of this eminent expert as to the rôle played by lime does not seem to cover the whole ground. He truly notes that the Japanese also — who indeed acquired the art of porcelain manufacture from China — added lime to their glazing material. But he fails to note that the glazes of Japan could never bear comparison with those of China in lustre, depth, and solidity. The one point in which the manufacturing processes of China differed emphatically from those of both Europe and Japan was that the Chinese potters applied the glazing material to the unstoved piece, whereas the potters of Japan and Europe alike applied it to ware which had received a preliminary firing; that is, to ware in the state of biscuit. Does it not seem reasonable to ascribe the marked difference of the results in the two cases, in part at least, to this salient difference of process? An example which supports this idea may be found in European keramics. It is French majolica, the manufacture of which was commenced at Nevers by Antoine Conrade, in 1644, and continued with much success at Rouen and Moustiers. This was faience decorated *au grand feu*, the decorator using metallic oxides which, under the influence of heat, became incorporated with the glaze. The makers of the ware never quite overcame the difficulties of the process. Their productions are not remarkable for technical perfection. But it has never been denied that the glaze of this French majolica possessed qualities of solidity and softness, lustre and depth, which no other manufacturing process gave. M. Salvétat and other writers have not hesitated to conclude that because the Chinese potters did not avail themselves of the technical facilities offered by *porcelaine dégourdie* as a recipient of glazing material, they were ignorant of those advantages. Such an inference sounds harsh and unwarranted. The Chinese of the *Kang-hsi* era, at all events, fully understood the secret of producing *couleurs de demi-grand feu:* in other words, they knew how to apply enamels to porcelain already fired, and how to vitrify and fix them by a second firing at reduced temperatures. Yet while possessing this knowledge, the Chinese expert, in the great majority of cases, did not depart from his old-fashioned method of applying the glazing material to the unstoved piece and subjecting both *pâte* and glaze to the same degree of temperature. Is it conceivable that the great technical inconvenience of the latter process would have been wantonly endured by a keramist skilled also in the former, unless some compensatory advantage were obtained? The more reasonable supposition is, that, though the absorbent properties of *porcelaine dégourdie* and the ease of glazing it were well known at Ching-tê-chên, the Chinese keramist deliberately chose the incomparably more troublesome and unsafe plan of applying his glazes to the unstoved *pâte*, because by no other process could he obtain the lustre, depth, and softness so highly prized by his country's connoisseurs. Japan, China's pupil and confessedly her inferior in the technicalities of porcelain manufacture, always used the *su-yaki-gama*, or kiln for stoving porcelain before glazing. Her potters, however, adopted this simpler process, not wholly from choice, but because the materials immediately available to them for manufacturing the porcelain mass were too refractory to permit varieties of composition such as those habitually resorted to in China. In this branch of his art the Ching-tê-chên expert was deeply versed. Some of his most delicate and beautiful monochromatic glazes are found, not on true porcelain, but on fine stone-ware. The Japanese, on the other hand, had to content themselves with a lower range of technical excellence, and they naturally eschewed a process which, in their case, offered no adequate compensation for its great difficulties. That they thoroughly appreciated and would gladly have emulated the brilliant velvet-like glazes of China, there can be no doubt. But they never succeeded in producing anything of comparable beauty, although, so far as concerns composition their glazes did not differ from those of the Chinese potters sufficiently to account for the signally superior results obtained by the latter. On the whole, it appears a reasonable conclusion that the exceptional qualities of Chinese glazes were due in part only to the nature of the materials employed, and that they owed something to the troublesome and seemingly unscientific method of their application.

A word of explanation may be added here with reference to the expressions *couleurs de grand feu* and *couleurs de demi-grand feu*. In the case of the former, the colouring matter is mixed with the glaze, applied to the raw *pâte*, and exposed to the full heat of the porcelain furnace. In the case of the latter, the colouring matter is added to a fusible base, is applied to the ware already baked, and is subjected subsequently to a reduced temperature under which the base vitrifies and adheres to the glaze at the same time as the colours develop. The method of mixing the colouring matter with the glaze, and exposing the finished piece to a high temperature was adopted by the Chinese in the case of their richest monochromatic and polychromatic glazes, with exceptions to be presently noted. The *couleurs de demi-grand feu* were employed in the decoration of enamelled porcelain. The colours were obtained from metallic oxides. Binoxide of copper gave green, bluish green, and turquoise blue; oxide of cobalt, blue; oxide of antimony, yellow; oxide of iron, brown and vermilion; oxide of manganese, violet and black; arsenical acid or stannic acid, white; chloride of gold, certain shades of carmine; and oxide of chromium, certain tints of green. A third range of colours was developed at a still lower temperature. These are known as *couleurs de petit feu*. They are of the nature of pigments rather than enamels, and the Chinese potters do not seem to have employed them until the middle of the eighteenth century.

The glazes noted above as exceptions to the rule of application to the surface of the crude *pâte*, were yellow, violet, peacock green, "king-fisher's wing" and "cucumber-rind" green. These were applied to porcelain in the form of biscuit, but, on the other hand, the temperature to which they were subsequently subjected almost justifies their inclusion in the category of *couleurs de grand feu*.

It is evident that great difficulty attended the manufacture of *couleurs de grand feu* according to the Chinese process. The potter, in order to apply his glaze, had to handle the piece before stoving, when the soft clay was sensible to the slightest pressure. To pour the glazing material over it in this condition, or to immerse it in a bath of glaze, with such delicacy of manipulation that no distortion of form occurred, was a feat requiring much practical skill. To facilitate the operation a foot of clay was left adhering to the piece until the process of glazing was completed, and on the removal of this superfluous clay, the rim, or it might be the whole under surface, of the base remained unglazed. Sometimes the latter defect was partially remedied, but in scarcely any cases was glaze applied to the rims at the bottom of Chinese wares.

When egg-shell porcelain or other very delicate ware had to be glazed, the methods of aspersion or immersion while the clay was still soft, presented additional embarrassment. It is said that the difficulty of handling such pieces inspired the invention of the process of insufflation, to which are due some very beautiful effects. But examination of the curiously mottled glazes of the *Chün-yao* and other *chefs-d'œuvre* of the *Sung* Dynasty, shows that the practice of some such method must have preceded by a considerable interval the manufacture of egg-shell porcelain. In applying glaze by insufflation, the potter used a tube having its orifice covered with gauze, through which he blew the glazing material. In this way a dappled appearance, known by collectors as *soufflé*, was obtained. The results varied according to the patience with which this process was performed and the degree of consistency of the glaze. Evidently the tone of the colour could be changed by repeating the insufflation; in this respect the process may be described as stippling. Again, by blowing on different colours, intermingled clouds of variegated speckles made their appearance. Finally, by increasing the consistency of the glazing material and the quantity of *kaolin* it contained, there was produced a shagreened surface varying in roughness from the rind of a lime to a dust of millet seed.

As to the means by which the Chinese manufactured the much-admired egg-shell porcelain, there is no certain information. In Europe, ware of great thinness is obtained by a simple and ingenious device. The porcelain *pâte*, having been brought to a liquid state, is poured into a mould of dry plaster. That portion of the *pâte* which comes into direct contact with the plaster is deprived of its moisture by the absorbent properties of the plaster, and adheres to the surface of the mould. The mould being then reversed and the liquid *pâte* run off, there remains a thickness of porcelain varying with the absorbent properties of the plaster and the time during which these are suffered to act. The Chinese keramist may have been acquainted with this process, but evidence points in the other direction. At all events, he succeeded in manufacturing porcelain so thin that, according to his own description, it seemed to consist of glazing material only.

With respect to the stoving of Chinese porcelain, there are few specially interesting points to be noticed. The temperature to which the kiln was raised fell short of that employed in Europe by from two to three hundred degrees. The furnace, in ordinary cases, was kept alight for about thirty-six hours, and after its extinction, the contents of the kiln were left to cool gradually. The latter process occupied four or five days, and care was taken to exclude the air during the cooling. It should be mentioned that the heating also was gradual, the maximum temperature not being developed until several hours after lighting the furnace. Various effects were produced by the introduction of currents of air while the porcelain was incandescent, but these have already been spoken of in the context of the wares they concern. M. d'Entrecolles, describing the practice in vogue at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when he was in China, says: — "The furnace is heated during a day and night, after which two men take it in turn to feed wood incessantly to the fire. The quantity of wood consumed by each furnace is as much as a hundred and eighty charges. Judging by what Chinese books tell us, this quantity of wood could not have sufficed in former times. We are assured that although the furnaces were only half as large then as they are now, two hundred and forty charges of wood were fed to each, with an additional twenty in wet weather. The preliminary burning was kept up for seven days and seven nights, and on the eighth day, the fire was raised to its strongest heat. The conclusion cannot be avoided that the porcelain of former times was much thicker than that of the present day (1720). Another point of difference is also observable. Formerly the furnace was not opened until ten days had elapsed from the time of extinguishing the fire, in the case of large pieces, and five days in the case of small. An interval of some days still separates the opening of the oven and the extinction of the fire where large porcelains are concerned, since otherwise they would crack. But as for small pieces, if the fire has been put out in the evening, for example, they are taken from the oven the following morning." M. d'Entrecolles' deduction is doubtless accurate with regard to the greater body of the heavy stone-wares of early epochs. But something must be placed to the account of the thick, viscous glazes, which required to be stoved more gradually as well as more intensely, giving results that well repaid the labour and cost expended in producing them.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the genius of the Chinese keramist was mechanical rather than artistic. His choicest pieces owed their value to excellence of glaze, delicacy of colour, or infinitely patient use of the graver's and moulder's tool. When he chose figure subjects to adorn his pieces, he too often fell into the mistake, without possessing the graphical ability, of the early Delft potters, who thought that elaboration of detail could supply the place of artistic conception. And the grotesque perspective of the Chinese decorator helped to heighten the confused effect of his scenes. Even in depicting a landscape he was generally the slave of conventionality. His rocks and trees bore little resemblance to anything common in nature. When he treated floral subjects he was certainly happier. But even then he seldom rose above the level of a copyist, for his designs were faithfully borrowed from the pictorial scrolls with which his country abounded. So, too, of his shapes, and of the wealth of diapers, arabesques, and scroll patterns which he employed. For these he went direct to the innumerable bronzes which the genius of Chinese workers in metals—genius exercised through long centuries — had bequeathed to the nation. It is true that upon some specimens of *Kai-pien* blue-and-white and of *Famille Rose* decoration is found which in grace, delicacy, and artistic conception leaves nothing to be desired. But these are notable exceptions. In a majority of cases the mechanical element is conspicuous. When the connoisseur comes, however, to consider the quality of the Chinese potter's *pâtes;* the remarkable skill with which he varied their composition according to the nature of their covering; the marvellous softness and lustre of his glazes; his extraordinary range of fancy in respect of colours, and the brilliancy and purity of his enamels, it is necessary to admit that in everything relating to the technique of his art, he has no equal. The remarks upon this subject by the eminent expert, M.

Alphonse Salvétat, in his preface to M. Stanislas Julien's *Histoire et Fabrication de la Porcelaine Chinoise*, are of much interest. "Variety," he writes, "of *fonds colorés de grand feu* has made the reputation of Chinese porcelain quite as much, perhaps, as originality of decoration and rich harmony of painting. The analyses which I have been able to make of these colours, as well as the syntheses which I have tried, justify me in regarding as tolerably exact the greater part of the recipes given in Chinese books, at any rate in the case of those where the synonyms are easily found. Some of the Chinese colours *de grand feu* have not been as yet reproduced on European porcelains. I may cite specially the clear, bluish green colour known as *céladon*, so much sought after by amateurs, and the reds, sometimes orange, sometimes bordering upon violet, which owe their colour to protoxide of copper. These tints are of great delicacy and brilliancy. It would be a matter of real interest to reproduce them for use on our porcelains. But this is not the place to give recipes which render their production probable, perhaps possible. It is to be regretted that the detailed instructions given by M. Bronginart, at different epochs, to travellers setting out for China, or the letters which I have myself addressed to persons living in that distant country, have not brought us more complete ideas upon this subject than those acquired by examining or analysing pieces which we have been permitted to study. The want of isolated materials and their absence in either a crude or prepared form, as they were furnished by the consignment of Père Ly, so far as concerns decorations in *couleurs de moufle* induce us to think, as has been often said, that those colours are no longer manufactured in China and that the methods of producing them are lost. There are also found, in certain Chinese colours, shades which appear accidental, as *céladons* and reds, and which prove that those people owed much to chance in their manufactures. The same glaze gives different results under varying conditions. It has been well demonstrated by me that empirical essays only could have led to the discovery of most of the colours which we seek to imitate. This remark applies above all to colours obtained by mixing, in variable proportions, ferruginous manganese and cobaltiferous earth with white glazing material already prepared. It is evident that colours obtained by such mixing could not always present identical tints; that the state of the atmosphere in the furnace could change them; that they would be more or less green, more or less black, according to the original composition of the materials employed in their preparation and according to the proportions in which those materials were mixed. "The *fond laque* (golden brown or dead-leaf colour) of China presents, like the colours we have just enumerated, variations of tone. Sometimes it is clear; sometimes it is deep; sometimes it is like bronze. These differences are due to the proportion of oxide of iron which enters into the components of the mass, as well as to the influences of the gas which envelops it in the kiln. . . . The colour, as is known, can be perfectly imitated in France by adding to ordinary white glazing material a quantity of oxide of iron.

"The mineral cobalt, as it is found in China, that is to say, peroxide of cobaltiferous manganese, mixed simply with white glazing material, gives a blue

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TEAPOT OF *YI-HSING* POTTERY.
(See page 353.)

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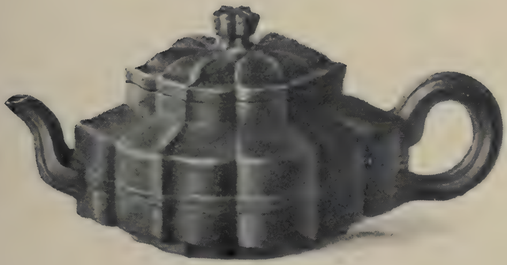

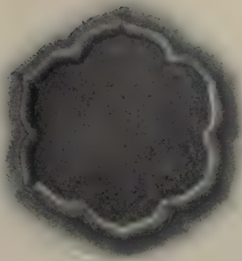

colour *au grand feu*, sometimes pale, sometimes deep. According to the quantities added and the cobaltiferous richness of the mineral employed, blues of a character more or less violet are obtained.

"When one examines attentively the manner in which black glazes were produced on Chinese porcelain, one sees that all are not simularly manufactured. In some cases the black results from the thickness of the coloured glaze; in others the superposition of various colours of different shades produces a tint of such intensity that it appears black. Sometimes the black is obtained by superposing *brun de laque* on a blue ground: sometimes, again, it is produced by the inverse process of superposing blue on *brun de laque*.

"I conclude here my examination of the principal *fonds de grand feu* which characterise Chinese porcelains. Evidently the manufacture comprises processes which give products very interesting, original, and beautiful. But these processes are often only modifications of those in more general use. At the same time, it is to be observed, inasmuch as the fact establishes another point of divergence between European and Oriental manufacturing methods, that among the colours peculiar to China, some have evidently been applied to biscuit, that is to say, to porcelain already stoved. Looking closely at these colours, they are seen to be cracked, and the crackle, which is very fine, forms a net-work with very small meshes. The analysis of these colours, or the simple test of touching them with fluor hydric acid, shows that there is a considerable proportion of oxide of lead in their composition. This naturally places them in the catalogue of colours used for decorative purposes, which may be called *couleurs de demi-grand feu*. We find nothing analogous to them in our own colours. To name them, will sufficiently indicate those which we qualify thus. They are: violet, turquoise blue, yellow, and green. . . . While admitting, however, that nothing recalling these productions is made in Europe, we hasten to add that it would be easy to imitate them; for the green and the turquoise blue owe their colours to copper; the yellow is obtained from antimony, and the violet from oxide of manganese slightly cobaltiferous. We are convinced that some synthetical experiments would lead at once to the imitation of these kinds of products. I may add that I prepared, some time ago, fusible colours which can be easily applied to the biscuit of Sèvres porcelain. But as they are stoved at a low temperature, they differ considerably from the colours prepared by the Chinese. Besides, borax enters into their composition.

"The *couleurs de moufle* claim our attention now, and in order to continue the comparison I have commenced between the porcelain of China and the corresponding European product, I shall briefly recall the colours which compose the palette of potters in Europe, especially at Sèvres. I will say a few words of the principal conditions they must fulfil. It will be easy to appreciate the differences to which I have still to direct attention.

"The colours should be able to attach themselves firmly to the surface of the porcelain, and at the same time to acquire by fusion the vitrification which is an indispensable feature in the *éclat* of the decoration. They are obtained by mixing either an oxide, or a compound of different colouring metallic oxides, with a vitreous flux, the composition of which varies with the nature of the colour it is desired to obtain. That which is most generally employed is known as *fondant aux gris*. It is used for greys, blacks, reds, blues, and yellows, and its ingredients are six parts of red lead, two of silicious sand, and of liquid borax. The colours are obtained ordinarily by mixing three parts of the flux, by weight, with one part of metallic oxide, so that the composition may be generally expressed as follows: —

Silica	16.7
Oxides of lead	50.0
Borax	8.3
Colouring oxides	25.0
	100.0

Sometimes the mixture of oxide and flux is melted or ground before using; sometimes, on the contrary, the oxides are simply mixed with the flux. The colour obtained is immediately employed without any prefatory fusion or calcination. If the colour is to be produced by a combination of the oxide with the flux, as is the case when oxide of cobalt is employed, it is necessary to melt the oxide previously with the flux, in order that the colours may have the required tone. But if the colouring matter belongs to the oxide itself, and if the latter has only to be disseminated and not brought into a state of combination with the flux, it must not be melted before use. The various colours produced by peroxide of iron belong to this category. Were the peroxide of iron melted with the flux, the colour would be perceptibly altered, and the second fusion undergone during the stoving of the decoration would produce a further change. The assortment of colours when made of preparations succinctly indicated here suffices to produce the *chefs d'œuvres* of oil-painting. All these colours should be able to melt at the same time, and to present, after stoving, an uniformly vitrified mass. This condition is essential. The paintings obtained with Chinese colours are far from satisfying these conditions as to equality of thickness and vitrification. Some are brilliant, perfectly melted, and applied enough thickly to appear in relief on the surface of the porcelain. Rose tints obtained from gold, green, and yellow belong to this category. Others, such as iron-reds, and blacks, are generally almost quite without vitrification, or show only a little vitrification at places where they are thin.[1] Their thickness is always much less than that of vitrified colours. Chinese pictures, too, have a character quite different from that of our pictures. Neither the figures nor the flesh are modelled. Black outlines define all the colours. The tones are not shaded. The colours are applied in flat tints which the painter afterwards damasks with different colours or with metals; but the operation of grinding and mixing different colours upon the palette, a method which gives so much resource to our painters, does not appear to be practised by the Chinese.

The appearance of their paintings, when closely examined, recalls that of the stained glass mosaics manufactured with so much art in the thirteenth century, and in which the whole design and all the modelling of figures and accessories were the result only of red or brown strokes applied to fragments of white coloured glass.

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[1] M. Salvétat is speaking of colours used in enamelled decoration. His remarks do not apply to black and iron-red monochromatic glazes.

" Having regard to the thickness of the colours employed and yet to the lack of intensity, is many cases, of the tone obtained, one is led to conclude that these colours, compared with our own, contained but a small proportion of the principal colouring matters. The conclusion has been fully verified by experiments. They prove that the colours by means of which the Chinese obtained such remarkable results, in respect of brilliancy and harmony of decorative effect, had much more analogy with the vitrified substances known as enamels than with anything else.

" Whatever be the origin of the colours used for the decoration of porcelain in China, they all present, simultaneously with great simplicity, a character of similarity which cannot escape attention. The flux, which is not distinct in the colour, is always composed of silica, of oxide of lead in proportions somewhat variable, and of a greater or less quantity of alkalies (soda and potash). This flux retains, in a liquefied state, as silicates, some hundreths only of colouring oxides: heir number is exceedingly limited. The colouring matters are, oxide of copper for greens and bluish greens; gold for reds; oxide of cobalt for blues; oxide of antimony for yellows; arsenical acid and stannic acid for whites. Oxide of iron and oxides of impure manganese (which give, one a red, the other a black) constitute the only exception, doubtless because it is impossible to obtain these colours by the process of liquefaction from the oxides mentioned above.

" This special composition of the colours used in

China leads to special fashions in the pictures they are employed to produce, and it is to this fact that porcelains manufactured by the Chinese and the Japanese owe their distinctive aspect. Some colours are applied directly, just as they are procured in the market. Others, before being used, require a varying addition, doubtless determined beforehand by experience. They are all thus brought to develop uniformly at a fixed temperature. An assortment obtained in Canton, where it was taken from the table of a Chinese painter, gives an example of a palette fully prepared for use. The necessary additions must have been already made, and we see that the white lead added was in very small quantities, if even that disclosed by the analysis is not due to the beginning of a change in the colour during the operation of grinding. It would carry me too far were I to compare in succession each of the Chinese colours examined above with its corresponding colour as used in Europe, whether at Sèvres or elsewhere. I shall limit myself, therefore, to noting in a few words and in a general manner the essential differences that distinguish the two palettes. It will thus be possible to appreciate naturally the opposing aspects of European porcelains and of similar wares manufactured in China or Japan; aspects so different that it is impossible, even at first sight, to confound the productions of the two countries.

"I have said that in Europe colours for painting hard porcelain are formed by mixing certain oxides with certain fluxes. And I have noted that the Chinese colours differ completely as much in respect of the nature of the constituents of the flux as in the proportions of the colouring oxide. Differences no less distinct are observed when we consider the state in which the colouring matter presents itself. Finally, the two assortments admit of no further comparison when we come to establish a parallel between the substances employed as principal colouring matters in the two cases.

"We have seen that oxides employed in the palette of the Chinese were confined to oxide of copper, gold, antimony, arsenic, tin, and oxide of impure cobalt, which gives sometimes blue, sometimes black; finally, to oxide of iron, which produces a species of red. We have seen that in the colours of Europe, where use is made of various oxides cited above, much advantage is derived from substances unknown to the Chinese. Thus the tone of pure oxide of cobalt is modified by combination with oxide of zinc or aluminum; sometimes with aluminum and oxide of chromium; pure oxide of iron furnishes a dozen different shades from orange red to deep violet; pale or deep ochres, yellows, or browns are obtained by combining various proportions of oxide of iron, oxide of zinc, and oxide of cobalt or nickel; the browns are obtained by increasing the proportions of oxide of cobalt contained in the composition that gives the ochres; the blacks, by suppressing the oxide of zinc in the same preparations. The shades of yellow are varied by adding either oxide of zinc or tin to lighten them, or oxide of iron to render them deeper. Oxide of chromium, pure or combined with oxide of cobalt or oxides of cobalt and zinc, gives yellowish greens and bluish greens which vary from pure green to almost pure blue. Metallic gold gives the purple of Cassius, which can be changed at will into violet, purple, or carmine. To this list may be added oxide of uranium, the chromates of iron, of baryta, of cadmium, which give useful colours, and in conclusion we may notice the recent employment of metals inoxidisable by heat, the discovery and preparation of which require a knowledge of chemistry not possessed by the Chinese. All these different principal colouring matters are found on European porcelains in a state of simple mixture; on Chinese porcelains, on the contrary, the oxides are dissolved, and this circumstance justifies us in comparing them to another species of production, well known in China and frequently met with in European industry also. In the vitreous compounds called 'enamels' in Europe, we find not only the same colours produced by the same oxides, but also a flux analogous and sometimes identical. Transparent enamels, as is well known, are vitreous compounds of ingredients varying according to the desired degree of fusibility, and coloured by fractions of oxides. The blues are furnished by oxide of cobalt; the greens by deutoxide of copper; the reds by gold. Opaque enamels, as yellow or white, owe their colour and their opacity either to antimony, or to arsenical or stannic acids, isolated or mixed. The resemblance that examination of the colours employed in China establishes between them and enamels, is fully confirmed by the manner in which the colours behave under the influence of heat. Experiments have been made upon Chinese and European wares with the assortments of Chinese colours obtained by M. Itier and Père Ly. On Chinese porcelain, the colours developed at a temperature lower than that employed to fix floral decoration at the Sèvres factory. But upon the Sèvres porcelain, no sooner were the colours developed than they came off in flakes. Direct experiments long ago showed that enamels cannot be used in the decoration of European porcelains owing to this grave defect. Whatever be the cause to which, in the case of European porcelain, this want of adherence on the part of the enamels is due, I think that it is to be found in the difference between the natures of the glazes of the two wares. The more fusible *pâte* of Chinese porcelain had to be covered with a glaze more fusible than that used in Europe, and it is the introduction of lime into the glazing material which, by diminishing the infusibility of the latter, and, perhaps, modifying its expansion, approaches its physical properties to those of enamel. If the aspect of Chinese porcelains differs from that of ours, if the harmony of their painting seems more varied, these things are, I believe, the necessary result of the methods employed in China. All the colours employed there have but little colouring matter; they have no value unless they are given a thickness which imparts to them a degree of relief impossible to obtain otherwise. The harmony of their decoration results from the nature and composition of their enamels.

"It remains only to say a few words of the processes of stoving the tender colours, or *couleurs de demi-grand feu*. Chinese books, and plates that we have seen separate the furnaces into two divisions — open and closed. The former are similar to the furnaces employed by enamellers. I am not aware that they are used anywhere in Europe for stoving decorated porcelain except in Germany. Even in China, the danger of breakage limits the employment of such furnaces to the stoving of small pieces. Large specimens are baked in closed furnaces, the arrangement of which is like that of our *moufles*. It seems, however, that these furnaces have a circular shape, which would make them resemble porcelain ovens of small dimensions. . . . If the reader has well understood my object in comparing the porcelain industries of China and of Europe, he will see the advantages that can be drawn by studying attentively the processes indicated in Chinese books for obtaining certain *fonds de couleurs au grand feu*. The reproduction of *céladon* as it is made in China, of the rich reds and lustrous blues so prized by amateurs, the imitation of crackle large and small, would confer advantages the more certain in that these products have a character of quite special originality, that they are much in vogue, and that, up to the present, attempts to imitate them in Europe have not been successful."

M. Salvétat might have added that attempts to reproduce these remarkable works are unsuccessful in China itself. Doubtless many causes have combined to bring about this result, but the most important, as well as the most comprehensive, is, perhaps, the loss of patronage. Patience that knew no weariness, and painstaking that kept no count of time, were distinguishing characteristics of the old artists, but they were characteristics that owed their development less to inspiration than to circumstance. In China, under successive Emperors from the *Tang* dynasty down to the middle of the seventeenth century, the keramist's masterpieces were destined for Imperial use. He was able to be sure that whatever excellence he might obtain, at whatever cost, would be more than adequately appreciated. Yet, even after so many long years of prosperous achievement—sufficient to have crystallised into a natural endowment the transmitted skill of fifty generations—a brief withdrawal of Court patronage had power to paralyse art. During the years that intervened between the fall of the *Ming* dynasty (1644) and the accession of the Emperor Kang-hsi (1661), the outcome of the best factories scarcely deserve to be called mediocre; and again, although the reigns of that sovereign and his two successors are memorable as a period of *renaissance* culminating in hitherto unparalled perfection, the illiberal policy of subsequent Emperors was the signal for an almost immediate loss of everything but tradition. Since the beginning of the present century, China has produced little that deserves to be classed with the works of her old masters. No longer are found the depth and softness of paste, rich velvety lustre of glaze and brilliancy of enamels that distinguished, as they are infallible evidences of, her keramic efforts prior to 1800; while in paintings, bronzes, and lacquer, the same marked inferiority is manifest.

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